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THE PERMANENCE OF
CHRISTIANITY

THE HASTIE LECTURES FOR 1915-17

THE PERMANENCE OF CHRISTIANITY

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INTRODUCTION

THERE are two main causes of the prevailing indifference, or even antagonism, towards the Christian religion. The first is the animal desire for material well-being, bodily comfort and enjoyment, which is characteristic of all classes ; the second is spiritual and moral uncertainty in regard to Christian doctrine and practice. The insatiable craving on the part of the already well-to-do people for greater wealth, on the one hand, and the obstreperous demand for a larger remuneration for their labour on the part of the poorer classes on the other, are manifestations of the former. Non-church-going, contempt of parsons and priests, distrust of the whole system of Christian doctrine and morality, and the sarcastic refusal to take any interest in Theology are evidences of the latter.

In view of these serious facts, there is a clamant need to understand the nature, claims, and benefits of the foundation truths of our

Christian religion. It is more important than ever that the Fundamentals of the Christian Faith should be stated in their naked simplicity, stripped of all that is superfluous and irrelevant, in order that they may be clearly understood and appreciated for their real value.

We would accordingly define the Christian Fundamentals as they appeal to the modern enlightened Christian as follows.

(1) Belief in the Personal God, the one sufficient explanation of human personality,¹ God immanent in the Cosmos, yet free: God the Truth, which is one and harmonious when clearly apprehended; God Omnipotent, Omniscient, Love, Righteousness, Blessedness; God seeking in all ages to reveal Himself to men, and man capable of knowing that God for whom his heart hungers: God ever desiring, above all things, the realization and perfecting of human personality in accordance with His own Divine Nature.

(2) Belief in Jesus Christ, God become In-

¹ By personality in man we mean the real, the essential ego, or self, which gradually evolves its being by, in, and through God, in intimate relationship with other personalities, and in direct contact with the material universe in which we find ourselves, and of which physically we are a constituent part, and which realizes its highest and fullest being in self-conscious and self-directed activity in, and through, and as, the spiritual life.

carnate in human flesh, our supreme and final authority in religion and morals: Christ, sinless in the days of His flesh, though truly tempted, and, as being sinless, at once our moral inspiration and our strength, by which we can overcome sin: Christ, through whose unique sacrifice forgiveness of sins is secured to the penitent, and the way of sanctification opened up: Christ, restored to His pre-incarnate state, ever living, savingly active, in the lives of His saints, the Church, and unredeemed men whom He seeks to save that God's redemptive purpose may be completely accomplished.

(3) Belief in the Holy Spirit, whose uplifting Presence and efficacious help are invariably given in answer to sincere prayer, and who is continually at work in the history of individual men and nations, as an awakening, guiding, comforting, and healing influence.

(4) The certainty that Christian experience of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is a real experience, which is pragmatically verified, and presents a body of experiential evidence which can be tested and demonstrated as indubitably real by the strictest scientific methods. The certainty of personal salvation through the realization of the Christ-life in our

present state, and the guarantee, on the grounds of authentic personal experience and our knowledge of God, of personal immortality, embracing moral and spiritual progress and blessedness for all sincere Christians, believers, and doers.

(5) The certainty that all truth is one as God is one, that there can be neither antagonism nor inconsistency between Christian doctrine, rightly understood, and well-authenticated scientific truth belonging to other spheres of knowledge. The conviction that the true development of Theology must follow at once the path of The Faith and freedom, and embody the retention of all the truly valuable elements of the hereditary religious experience, and, at the same time, seek to appropriate, with a view to further enlightenment, all established truths in the whole field of scientific research.

CHAPTER I

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

IF Christian believers are right, there is nothing so important, even in this age of many and fascinating interests, as the Fundamentals of the Christian Faith. For, to the Christian mind at least, to know these in the only way in which they can be truly known, namely, by their realization in the personal life, is to obtain peace in this present world and the assurance of life eternal in the world to come. Yet even the most convinced Christian cannot ignore the fact that these same Fundamentals do not hold sway over the hearts and minds of great multitudes of contemporary men of good education and admirable morality.¹ There

¹ W. L. George (*Labour and Housing at Port Sunlight*, p. 179) is right in ascribing the dying of religion among men as due to "its narrowness or sterility." While it is true that there are many educated people who have parted company with Christianity, it may be fairly maintained that the objection of educated men to Christianity is not due to their education, but to their failure to understand the true nature of real Christianity. Ramsay (*The Cities of St. Paul*, p. 41) is right

are rivals in the field, which deny the bare existence of these Fundamentals as realities. Perhaps there are more sincere, enlightened Christians in the world of to-day than at any previous period of history; but the vast numbers who are without, and are even antagonistic, should urge us to the task of seeking to present our foundations in certain light. There are those who would join our ranks if they were sure that we ourselves are certain of our position. There are those who say openly, by spoken word and written page, that no honest man of average ability and culture can any longer believe the dogmas of the Christian Church.¹ In view of these facts, there is a solemn call to arms. We must not

when he says of true Christianity that it "is the religion of educated minds." Proof of this is afforded by the facts given by C. F. G. Masterman (*In Peril of Change*, pp. 259-300), where he shows that in modern London it is the educated people who go to church. This is not contradicted by the investigations of Lombroso (*The Man of Genius*), by which he shows the kinship between religious genius and insanity. All genius, not merely religious genius, manifests abnormal traits. This is not out of keeping with the well-justified view that enlightened Christianity ought to be the faith of sane, educated men. "It is no longer necessary to scoff at Revelation in order to appear witty, or required to question its truth in order to appear learned" (J. H. Balfour, *Botany and Religion*, p. xxxvi).

¹ Nietzsche, *The Twilight of the Gods*, p. 176: "It is indecent nowadays to be a Christian."

merely leave it to our opponents to show that the central Christian doctrines are wrong. We must prove that these doctrines are true.

That Christ and His greatest Apostle attached the highest importance to the Fundamentals we may be sure. No man could draw any other conclusion from the Master's parable of "The Two Foundations." It is Paul who says, "For other Foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ," *i.e.* the Christ Incarnate, the Christ of the Atonement and the Resurrection, the Ever-living Christ. These facts, at one time, made a profound impression on the Scottish mind. The young theologian, whatever else he might be, had to be sound in regard to the great essentials, the Fundamentals. If the root of the matter was not in him, he could be no worthy minister of the Lord Jesus.

To-day it is otherwise. Doctrine is not so important as deportment. If a man be a flowery popular preacher, it matters nothing, in the eyes of many, what his theology is. Popularity may even be promoted by a pseudo-romantic touch of sarcasm in regard to the historic doctrines. In normal times of peace, the people, as a whole, interest themselves in the world outside Theology—in politics,

social reform, football, aviation, rubber-shares, the newest play, or song, or novel. They do not seem to have the time, or inclination, for the Fundamentals. The demand for a higher standard of living absorbs men's surplus energies and monopolizes their main efforts. There is the perennial assertion of rights, and a real, or fictitious, claim for an ever greater recompense for labour done. You find people, educated and cultured men and women of the world, brilliant and popular members of polite society, who, if you asked them, "What of the Fundamentals?" would stare at you, smile as if you were a kind of human antique, some sort of medieval survival, or, with obvious irritation, would suggest that it was bad taste to speak of such things at all.

In the interests of every one, a frank, enlightened restatement is needed. Thereby the faithful will be confirmed, the enemy silenced, and the ignorant saved from deception. To many, the question is not, "Do I know the Fundamentals?" but "Do they really exist?" Often there is grave misunderstanding as to what they really are. One man says, "I have ceased to believe in Christianity, because our professors and ministers themselves deny verbal inspiration." This man misunderstands the

real position of affairs. The Fundamentals do not stand or fall with verbal inspiration, any more than a man dies because we have changed our opinion about the nature and value of the clothes that he has been accustomed to wear.

Another says, "I have ceased to believe, because the geology, or biology, or some other thing, of the Bible is obviously crude or fallacious." The permanent value of the Fundamentals does not depend on the scientific accuracy of the Nature-knowledge of the Bible, any more than the sincerity and purity of a man's personal life demand that he should be thoroughly abreast of the newest discoveries in Astronomy or Physics. Just as it is quite possible that a man might have a competent knowledge of some particular branch of scientific study, and yet be a man who had practically given no serious thought to the great questions of the religious life, so is it possible that a man in his life may have had the most vital religious experiences, and yet be absolutely ignorant, or even wrongly informed, in regard to particular branches of scientific study. It would be a tragic fate that is in store for men if it were otherwise, for the probability is that the already wide gulf between the specialist's knowledge and the great body of cultured

people will ever widen and deepen, and, even in the case of men whose life is entirely devoted to science, it becomes increasingly impossible to claim mastery, except in a very circumscribed area. What the Bible does is the one thing that was possible to be done. Its writers use the knowledge and interpretation of Nature belonging to the particular age in which their message was given, and deliver their religious, that is, inspired, message to the world.

The science of the Bible, if, properly speaking, we can speak of its science, is not so much to be sarcastically denounced as fallacious, but regarded as the interpretation of Nature belonging to a certain stage of human development, just in the same way as the stage which we ourselves have reached is another on the long road which the human mind goes, following the gleam. The Fundamentals of the Christian Faith penetrate deeper than the contemporary and temporary interpretation of Nature. They are of the solid rock itself. The man who holds this antagonistic position which is being dealt with, at once misunderstands the character of the Fundamentals, and also the nature of human progress in knowledge. Apart from Christianity altogether, mankind made all-important discoveries in the

moral and religious sphere, when as yet they had the crudest of views in regard to Nature, and nothing of what we mean by modern science. If progress in the spiritual life of man had been destined to wait for scientific knowledge of Nature, it is difficult to see how human civilization could have been evolved at all. This principle applies in a unique degree to the Bible. The Bible, as an inspired book, is essentially a book of the religious life, a book of personal religious experience.

Another objector says, "It is simply inconceivable that men of a rude form of civilization, such as that in Palestine was during the days of the Apostles, could be able to instruct us." This is the argument of "Yankeeism," in the sphere of the religious life. But the man who argues thus fails to understand that material power, however much disciplined by inventive genius, and buttressed by colossal organization, is no guarantee of spiritual insight, or moral elevation. He fails to understand that a man may have been up in an aeroplane, or down in a submarine, and yet be profoundly ignorant of things far more important for the social and personal well-being of mankind—the eternal truths of the moral and spiritual life. The invention of the aeroplane does not obliterate

the atmosphere, nor does the building of the submarine absorb the sea, no more does that which we call modern civilization supersede the great Fundamentals of our Faith once delivered to the Apostles. The most modern aeroplane or submarine may one day be viewed in antiquarian museums as interesting relics of a long superseded age, whereas the Moral Law of Mount Sinai, and the doctrine of the Hill of Beatitudes, will still hold sway over human lives; or, alas for men! All these types disbelieve in the Fundamentals, because they have failed to understand what they are.

Then there is another type of man, who is not necessarily ignorant nor ill-informed—the agnostic, who maintains that the Fundamentals profess to deal with subjects which, from their very nature, are unknowable. It will be sufficient, meanwhile, to reply to the agnostic's denial of the possibility of knowing God, the affirmation of whose existence as the Creator of the Universe, and our Father, graciously revealed in Jesus Christ, may be described as “the corner-stone of the Fundamentals.” To begin with, we claim that, by the very constitution of our minds, we dare not refuse to continue our search for the ultimate explanation of life and being. It is a root

instinct of the human mind, notably active in the most vigorous types of human intelligence, which will not permit us to be satisfied with the merely descriptive results of the experimental sciences, but must ever search for existential backgrounds. We affirm that the search for God is not only, as the history of mankind shows, the most persistent fact, manifested in many forms, in human life, but it is a search which, from the inherent instinct of the human mind, cannot be abandoned.

We go further, and, in answer to the agnostic, we can affirm the truth of the corner-stone of the Fundamentals on the twofold ground (1) of reason, (2) of sane authentic experience. We start with the fact of human personality, the reality of which no sane man can deny without stultifying all experience, including that which we describe as scientific, and we say that it is impossible rationally to conceive of the existence of man except we postulate the Personality of God, as its Origin and Cause. There is an analogous case in the law of gravitation. No man can demonstrate the existence of this law in the abstract. It is simply, as it were, the framework into which facts of experience fit. It is perfectly true that, in the moral and spiritual experience of men,

there is not the same mathematical exactness and regularity that we find exemplified in the physical phenomena with which gravitation has to do; but the reason for this partly lies in the difference of the moral and spiritual life from the purely physical, and partly in the habit of considering human nature too much in a circumscribed parochial sense, rather than in its broad fundamental characteristics. The postulate God is the only postulate, discovered by the human mind, which is a sufficient explanation of the fact of human personality.¹ Starting from this, we find abundant corroborative evidence of the existence of the Personal God, in Nature and in History.

But we have even more direct and convincing proof. Nature and History are large and intricate subjects of which we can, at best, have only partial knowledge. But we have a simpler and surer source of evidence, the witness of the sane Christian man, who feels that the most certain facts of his life

¹ "Le conclus que Dieu existe. Cette conclusion est dans ma nature" (La Bruyère, *Des Esprits Forts*, p. 533). "Beauty must be more than an accident. The source of morality must be moral. The source of knowledge must be rational. If this be granted you rule out Mechanism, you rule out Naturalism, you rule out Agnosticism, and a lofty form of Theism becomes inevitable" (A. J. Balfour, *Theism and Humanism*, p. 250).

are God and fellowship with Him. Every truly redeemed man has in his own soul a laboratory, in which he finds, daily, indisputable evidence of an experiential nature, of the reality, activity, and interest of the Personal God. "Taste and see" is the perennial invitation of the Christ. Thomas Carlyle's view was substantially that every man has the religious instinct in his constitution, a God-given faculty of seeing, if he will, the divine, seeing God intuitively in human personality, in Nature, and in human history, and being forthwith inspired to reverent worship. This is a truth implied as a presupposition in the teaching of Christ. What the Gospel does is to call this power into active, enthusiastic life, and therefore increasing certainty. It is an echo in the religious sphere of the doctrine of Socrates, father of all true education, that the only way to educate the mind is not so much to fill it with more or less disconnected facts of experience or fancy, as rather to draw out of it, into the sunshine of the living world, what is planted there by God to begin with.

Another type of opponent would not deny the knowability of God, but affirms that the traditional knowledge of Him is inadequate, or that it is entirely the product of the sub-

jective imagination, that its content is nothing more than what pious men would have liked God to reveal Himself as, that the wish has been father to the Word. Otherwise expressed, these opponents would reduce all Theology to a species of neurotic Anthropology, all objective reality in religion to subjective unreality.

Now it may be freely allowed that Anthropology is one of the legitimate avenues leading to a truly rich Theology. It is also probable that Anthropology, as a helpmeet of Theology, is only now beginning to come to the recognition which it merits. But to say that Theology is a kind of phantom vision of Anthropology is to affirm that which is untrue. Theology is as certainly a science of personality as Anthropology is; but each exists in its own rights. Our own personality affords sure proof of the existence, and, to some extent, of the knowableness of God, of the Personality of God. Is it conceivable that God, thus known to be, should never have communicated to man real knowledge of Himself, or, if you will, should have permitted man, in his age-long searchings after Him, to be entirely cheated? It is not conceivable. To suppose this would be to deny to God what is an inherent instinct in man himself, namely, the desire to make

himself known to his fellows. It would be to deny the prime cause of all progressive human movement. The rational explanation is that God has revealed Himself directly to man, that He is from His very Nature the Self-revealing God, giving man a knowledge of Himself, which he could never have discovered by the mere study of his own personality, or by reading the somewhat indistinct hieroglyphics of Nature; and, on the other hand, that, in the light of this, man has been able by the use of his reason to increase his knowledge of the Most High by his own personal effort. Revelation is the basis of Theology; but Theology has extended our knowledge of the Divine, given by Revelation. The element of truth, which lies behind this type of objection, now being dealt with, is that our traditional knowledge of the Divine is not complete, and that some things, which have, hitherto at least, passed muster as knowledge of the Divine, are really only scaffolding, or the mason's rubbish-heap. The Spirit of Christ is in His Church. He is continually extending, and, at the same time, purifying the traditional knowledge of God, the Fundamentals of which, however, stand for ever sure.

There is a further type of man who plainly

tells us, "I cannot be bothered with these things." He does not see, nor does he wish to see, with the inner eye. But even the fact that the Fundamentals make such a radical and permanent claim on human life demands that they should be considered. If God exists, if He is our Origin, Life, and Destiny ; if there be uniform Moral Law in the Universe, punishment or reward for all ethical conduct—and it is something very like this that modern science teaches, with the sternness of the most pronounced Predestinationism—if we are called to an eternal crown of life, the acceptance or refusal of which depends upon our knowledge, understanding, and realization of these Fundamentals, then they simply dare not be ignored.

Many others believe that the efficiency of the old leaven of Christianity is doomed to lose its power through a newer and stronger which has come into the world, namely, the scientific spirit.¹ From time to time, they point out, a new spirit passes, like a tidal wave, through the life of mankind. Such was Hellenism, which spread over the lands conquered by Alexander the Great, such the spirit of Primi-

¹ "The modern scientific atmosphere exercises a sort of blighting atmosphere upon religious ardour" (*Lodge, Man and the Universe*, p. 3).

tive Christianity in the Roman world, such the spirit of the Renaissance and Reformation in Western Europe. The modern scientific spirit, they urge, is the newest and strongest of all. The intellectual problem of man is to know Nature¹ or the Universe,² of which he is a part, to discover those "things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world."³ But the task of science thus becomes the revelation of Christ. The scientific spirit wants to penetrate into all departments of ascertainable knowledge for the highest ends. It seeks to know, and to know accurately, all that can be known. Its possible object is everything in the Universe which man is capable (it may be after immense preliminary labour) of knowing. The scientific spirit is the mind of a robust intellectual youth, who has realized his own vigour, who, while conscious from time to time of partial failure, never loses heart, who ever presses on to the

¹ "Nature is the entire mechanism of the Universe, the Kosmos in all its parts" (Ray Lankester, *The Kingdom of Man*, p. 2).

² "The aim of science is the widest possible acquaintance with phenomena, where the word 'phenomena' does not imply the metaphysical distinction of appearance and reality" (Wendell T. Bush, *Avenarius and the Standpoint of Pure Experience*, p. 35).

³ St. Matt. xiii. 35.

mark of his high calling. At one time the uniform attitude of religion towards science was distrust or even antagonism. Religion, the old, buttressed by age-long tradition, dreaded the young giant that had suddenly sprung forth. Religion claimed to be the highest and richest experience of men from the dawn of human existence. Religion held science to be a pretentious upstart. Science was only the child of yesterday. Yet, in the judgment of sane men, how could there be antagonism, if they really understood each other, and if both were true? The only cases where opposition could arise would be, either where both religion and science were false, or where one of them was false and the other true, or where they misunderstood each other's position and claims, or where there was dogmatism based on an insecure tradition, on the one hand, and overweening confidence in theories not yet sufficiently established, on the other.

Religion and science, to be of value, must each be true, and the truth is one. They are not enemies at daggers drawn. They are co-adjutors in the service of truth. This at least is true of enlightened Christianity and real science. They have many points immediately in common. They both emphasize the im-

portance of long preparation to secure a desirable end. They are marked by the same spirit of heroism, which manfully faces loneliness, single-handed labour, years of work, it may be without any substantial reward, toil done for truth's sake, sacrifice of pleasure and even health, renunciation of prejudice and cheap fame, readiness to surrender an opinion, previously held, in view of further experience and discovery,¹ above all absolute devotion to the truth for truth's sake.² Science has her roll of martyrs as well as the Church. In each you find the impulse to know. Both religion and science have to do with the Universe. In both you find an impressive earnestness, while facing the problem of the world. Both seek the truth. Religion, as little as science, can be a matter of mere feeling. Both are convinced that to know truth and to live in accordance with truth are absolutely essential to the well-being of man as part of the Universe,

¹ "The progress of science, both physical and historic, is as clear a call to us to revise the Protestant theology of our fathers as were the Roman abuses and oppression in the sixteenth century a call to a revolt of the Teutonic religious spirit" (Gardner, *The Growth of Christianity*, p. 240).

² "Science seems to me to teach in the highest and strongest manner the great truth which is embodied in the Christian conception of entire surrender to the Will of God" (Huxley, *Life and Letters*).

which is truth. Both recognize the uniformity of law in the Kosmos. Both are convinced that "the notion of chance is a misleading figment inherited by the modern world from days of blank ignorance."¹ Only religion goes a step further than science requires to go, and affirms that a Universe, such as ours is, where there is uniformly law, and which, in virtue of that law, may in a sense be described as self-sufficient, is just such a world as must imply² the existence and all-prevailing power of God. The various sciences are the handmaidens of truth, working in different parts of the vineyard. Religion is that handmaiden who keeps in touch with all the others, derives information from all, and thus forms the best view of the conditions and progress in the vineyard as a whole, and who also, in virtue of this large knowledge, is most impressed with the possibilities of further productiveness in the vineyard, and regulates its whole working in view of her special knowledge of the great force behind, upon which the productiveness ultimately depends. The various sciences deal with special objects as such. Religion is mainly

¹ Ray Lankester, *Kingdom of Man*, p. 8.

² Cp. Rudolph Otto's objection to using "created" and "creation." *Naturalism and Religion*, p. 54.

interested in that which is ultimate, behind all the objects, and the explanation of the objects in which the sciences are interested, and, in view of this, seeks to give us some practical guidance as to man's origin, life, and destiny. The scientist may, or may not, as he chooses, accept a certain religious theory of the ultimate basis of the Universe; but he has no justification for rejecting such, unless his study of the special part of the mechanism of the Universe in which he is interested unmistakably shows that a certain religious theory is undoubtedly false. Religion and science have their respective objects in view. Religious doctrine which is well ascertained and carefully systematized may even claim to be a science. Religion and science should supplement and correct each other. They cannot, if true to their respective vocations, be legitimately opposed to each other, any more than, in a well-conducted business, the head should be continually carrying on a species of guerilla warfare with the sub-managers. The parable which illustrates best the point under discussion is that of the house divided against itself.

The ideal theologian in modern times is the man who retains from the religious testimony of the race—the religious race-consciousness—

in the past, what he has no valid reason to reject, and who, at the same time, takes a conjoint view of all well-ascertained scientific results, and, from both, formulates his best possible convictions (implying partly knowledge and partly faith) of the ultimate cause or basis of the Universe, and seeks to regulate all human activity relative to life and destiny in view of this. In religion there must be a body of well-ascertained fact and a double region of faith : (1) faith which is based on what is best in the past religious experience of the race, and (2) faith which is a further deduction from a conjoint view of the well-ascertained knowledge of the sciences. It will always be wisdom, when the first of these forms of faith is called into question, to examine and see that it does not collide with more accurate historical investigation, or with the sufficiently established data and results of the physical and psychological sciences. The quarrel between religion and science has been largely due to the fact that defenders of the faith have too often failed to see that our religious knowledge of the truth expands and grows just like any other kind of knowledge. The modern scientific spirit would not deny that there may be an element of truth in all the dogmas of the

Church; but what it does deny is that there can be absoluteness or finality in the verbal expression of that truth.

For a similar reason, the modern scientific spirit cannot understand the claims to infallibility made by the Papacy, because this doctrine implies an obsolete and false conception of the way in which alone the truth can be known.¹ The Roman Catholic Church has been astute enough to encourage a number of her clergy to become most erudite students, both in the fields of historical and natural science; but, whether they are aware of it or not, there must ever remain a fundamental inconsistency between scientific method and the infallible claims of the head of their Church. As will be shown in the further treatment of our subject, the one Church where there is untrammelled freedom to be at once a scientist and a theologian is the Church which holds the Reformed Faith. The true attitude of religion towards science is not to make dogmatic and really impossible claims to authority, nor to try to explain away any new discovery made by historical or physical science; but

¹ Cobb has well described the Roman Catholic Church as "an intellectual derelict." *Hibbert Journal*, July 1903, "Do we believe in the Reformation?"

to utilize the latter as a further source of light on religion's main object, viz. the elucidation of the nature of the ultimate basis of the Universe. On the other hand, the sciences cannot afford to dispense with the aid which religion gives. The moral qualities of the true scientific investigator are essentially religious, essentially Christian. The knowledge of the ultimate basis of the Universe which true religion supplies must ever be valuable to a specialist working at some particular fragment of the Universe. The knowledge of the success or failure of the operations of the fighting line as a whole, and the deduction from that as to what the general plan of advance or retirement should be, cannot be information to be ignored by any one particular regiment. Further, true religion must ever have a salutary influence on the scientific spirit just because of the emphasis which religion always lays on human personality. No scientist would deny that it is through the human mind that we know the Universe. No one would deny that, if there be an ultimate Cause or Basis of the mechanism or organism of the Universe, the best key to the interpretation of that must be what science uniformly admits is the highest product of the Kosmos, the hub of

the wheel—human life and personality. In regard to what is the ultimate basis of Nature, the testimony of the human heart, mind, and will must be of greater value than, say, the evidence from the study of a crystal.

Religion and the scientific spirit, in short, are not enemies. They are co-operators in the same field. The minister is a specialist in human nature, quite as much as the geologist is in the formation of the rocks. The homes, and still more the hearts, of his people are the theologian's laboratory, and if he be an honest, truth-loving man, and uses his data legitimately, he can, always keeping in mind the well-ascertained facts from all other parts of the scientific field, contribute his own quota towards the sum of human knowledge. And specially he can help to throw some light upon the existence and character of that Being who, he believes, is a Personality,¹ who is the ultimate Basis of the Kosmos, and to whom we instinctively pray and express our gratitude, in the same way and for similar reasons, as a dutiful child gives his affectionate regard to, and wisely seeks the

¹ Cp. Garvie, *Personality in God, Christ, Man* (*Hibbert Journal*, April 1907).

counsel of, a respected parent. To the experienced Christian soul it is a certainty that God gives him light in regard to Himself as the Ultimate Cause. This light he is able to hand on to others, and it is a light which benefits, as it applies to the whole life of man without and within, to his knowledge, feeling, and will. Within the sphere of that light, hypocrisy and make-believe are to the man of religion, as to the purely scientific man, madness, because these imply a self-contradiction in a Universe which, being the Universe of God, cannot possibly contain such, when at least we understand it aright.

Again, there are vast numbers of working men who believe that historic Christianity and its system of doctrine and practice are doomed to be supplanted by a world-wide socialistic democracy, which is self-sufficient and does not need to take any account of Christianity. To deal adequately with this view, it is necessary that we should form a clear conception of what democracy is. The word "democracy" is commonly used in a somewhat vague and indefinite sense. We call the growing demand that no part of the community should be neglected, democratic. It is democratic to insist that justice should be done to the poor,

even apart from moral tests, simply because they are human beings, and therefore have rights. The newer democracy tends to abolish old-fashioned charity and consequent gratitude, and to substitute for this justice and rights. There is the democratic protest against the conscious loss of mental, moral, and physical power under existing industrial conditions. Democratic is the growing sense of the influence of combined action. Democratic the conviction that it is of supreme value to know men through personal experience in contact with large bodies of men. There is the democratic use of literature through public libraries and cheap editions, and the utterances of the Press which, by their ultra-democratic spirit, are often unduly biased and even fallacious. Even the tendency to regard the criminal as not so much a man who has sinned, but rather as a man who has been sinned against, in his heredity, or at some stage of his personal development, is one of the signs of an advancing democracy.

Democracy is literally “the rule of the people.” It stands in marked contrast to autocracy, the rule of one, a Kaiser, Mikado, or Sultan ; to aristocracy, “the rule of the best,”

usually meaning thereby the rule of those of noble descent, the oligarchies of Greece, the patricians of Rome ; and to plutocracy, " the rule of the rich," the nearest approach to which is perhaps found in the United States of America. In strictness, we can distinguish five meanings of the word " democracy " ; (1) the pure and simple government of the people ; (2) a commonwealth in which the people choose, directly or indirectly, their representatives to legislate ; (3) the status of political or legal equality ; (4) the principles of a party which calls itself democratic ; (5) the mass of the people when regarded as possessing political powers.

A good working definition is " the rule of the people." ¹

It is open to question whether our modern democracies might not be described best as " mechanocracies," because of the industrial character of the great democratic countries. It is also a question whether those countries are not plutocracies rather than democracies. The power of wealth, open and beneath the surface, is enormous, and, in view of this fact, it is easy to understand the feeling of revolt

¹ President Lincoln defined democracy as " the government of the people, by the people, for the people."

against the domination of the moneyed minority.¹ In the conflict, money *versus* men, which will win? Time alone can show.

If, then, democracy be the rule of the people, who are the people? Not a class, not even that class which constitutes an overwhelming majority. It is possible that there might be a community in which the majority was insane. The tendency in all civilized countries is towards an increase in insanity, so that such a condition is not inconceivable.

In every civilized State you have several distinct types: the farmer, the doctor, the skilled worker, the ordinary labourer, the merchant, and so on. All these together are the people, and the true democracy is that which recognizes the just rights of all. In the human body you have nerves, blood, muscles, bones. The health of the body will be maintained by giving each its due nourishment and care. The legislation of our land in the eighteenth century was class-legislation. The legisla-

¹ H. Belloc has endeavoured to show that the evils of modern Capitalism are directly the outcome of the Protestant Reformation. But he fails to show two things: (1) that Capitalism would not have arisen even supposing the Reformation had not occurred, and (2) that Capitalism, in spite of its undoubted evils, is not a healthier condition of life than the lethargy of the Catholic Middle Ages. H. Belloc, *The History of England*, vol. xi. pp. xxii.-xxiii.

tion asked for by the socialist of to-day is class-legislation. Both alike are incompatible with a true democracy. All class-legislation is. A mere numerical majority is not justified in claiming to rule unless its members be as well educated and well behaved as any in the land. Quality should count for more than quantity. The class does not instruct the teacher; but the teacher the class.¹ The sane view of the State is Plato's, where each profession, each calling, has its own place and its own rights. The true democracy is not the rule of the so-called "upper classes," but the rule of the people. Who, then, are the people? Manifestly not the criminals, the denizens of Peterhead or Dartmoor prisons, forgers, swindlers, violent assaulters, although that caricature of a true democracy, which calls itself Socialism, would logically canonize Bill Sikes, and make him a saint, because he had the courage, they would say, to take things which really belonged to him. Not the idiots, either born, or manufactured by vice or misfortune. Not the ineptitudes or the slaves of vice. For the true democracy must ever exalt the moral qualities

¹ One of the ridiculous fruits of Russian Bolshevism has been that committees of the school-children dictate to the masters. The inevitable result has been the destruction of all discipline.

—self-restraint, wisdom, sagacity, foresight, self-sacrifice—qualities essential to good rulers. We must deduct the criminal class, the systematic offenders against the amenities of society, as well as those who injure legitimate personal rights and privileges. Deduct again the children, and the youth up to a certain age, who have not yet had that experience and knowledge of the State, Nature, Life, and the Ultimate Cause, God, sufficient to make them competent to judge. The ideal democracy would be one where the qualifications were sanity, character, experience, saintliness, and sound education. But there must obviously be grave difficulty in applying this test on all points. A man may be quite unfit morally to take his part in the government of a land, and yet you could not lay hold of anything in his conduct for which you can put him in prison or brand him as a criminal. Equally grave is the difficulty in regard to education. Illiteracy is vanishing to zero-point in our land, yet how much has still to be done till we can confidently say, “All our school-children who leave school have at least the foundation laid of that education which, if followed up, will make a man a good citizen”? It is much to be deplored that some inspiration cannot be given to the children at

school to continue in after-years a steady self-education.¹ For one who, after school-days, reads educative books, there are multitudes who read, if they read at all, what, from the really educative point of view, is worthless. In the majority of cases our democracy suffers from the fault that, from fourteen years onwards, there is a process of de-education. Many teachers would be surprised, if they examined their former pupils, some six or seven years after they had left school, to find that they could not read aloud decently an average newspaper paragraph, or compose with grammatical and orthographic correctness a simple letter. The great want of our education is the lack of desire on the part of young men and women to prosecute self-improvement in after-years. Until this is remedied you cannot have an ideal democracy, that is, a democracy which is dominated by the twofold idea of education and morality. The message of sound religion in this matter is—just because this Universe is a Universe permeated by intelligence, and just because man realizes his life by living in accordance with the moral laws of the Ultimate Basis of the Universe, God, so a man,

¹ This is necessary in spite of all that may be expected from the continuation classes under the new Education Acts.

for his own personal good and happiness, as well as in order that he may do his duty by the State worthily, should ever aim at progressive education, and seek a stronger, purer morality. The man of religion frankly recognizes that there is no such thing as an actually ideal democracy in the world as it is at present, but holds up to the existing democracies, as the ideal for each man to aim at, progressive education and morality, in accordance with the rational and ethical character of the Personal God who is behind Nature, which includes all governments.

The genius of Christianity is democratic. Even Judaism, while aristocratic in its attitude towards other races, was democratic within itself. All men, by right of descent from Adam, had the image of God. Abraham, Moses, Saul, David, most of the prophets and leaders, were sons of the people, like our own Knox and Buchanan. Jesus broadened out the principle. The universalism of Christianity is democratic. Jesus “lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” He Himself was born in a manger. His disciples were of the humblest class. They preached that God is no respecter of persons. The spirit of Christianity looks beyond artificial class-distinctions. It does not exclude

either the socially high or the socially low. The attention is fixed on man as man, as a being capable of moral and intellectual redemption, of loving, worshipping, serving, and living for God. Christianity aims at securing a democracy which is also an aristocracy, that is, a community where every one is a "best man of Christ." The fundamental distinction of Christianity is that between the good and the bad, between those who realize their life in keeping with the will of God, the Ultimate Cause of the Universe, and those who do not.

To the Christian mind, the true democracy would recognize in man the highest product of Nature in this world, what one may call the image of God in him. It emphasizes the right of man, as such, to get every encouragement to realize himself, the value of combined effort in the helpful spirit of brotherhood. In a true democracy a man must be always ready to sacrifice lesser selfish ends for the sake of others, and for the future of the race.¹ Selfishness in the individual in regard to coming generations must be abhorrent to a true democracy. Due regard to the Ultimate Basis, God, must ever be a mark of it.

The brotherhood of man is a brotherhood in

¹ Cp. Benjamin Kidd, *Principles of Western Civilization*, p. 8.

view of the fact that each man is potentially an example of the highest product of this world, but a product which could not have been evolved without the Ultimate Basis or Cause, God. A man cannot do injury to another without hurting himself in a Universe of which both are parts. The message of religion, of Christianity, as interpreted and set forth by the Reformed doctrine, is manifold. In view of the Ultimate Basis of the Universe, the Personal God, the people must qualify themselves to exercise rule, by education, pure character, personal effort (which has the right to claim reward, both material good and appreciation), the spirit of mercy, by which the weakly and infirm shall be taken care of, not as a charity, but through love and a sense of duty. The Christian religion proclaims that it is a law of God that all men should work to realize their true life, and therefore ordains that stringent methods should be used to compel the idle to work. Work must never be regarded as a drudgery, but should be joyfully done, because God is not only the incessant worker, but manifestly rejoices in all that He does. For this reason work can never be equated in mere terms of pay. It is an end in itself, and the highest type of work is that

which is accomplished purely for the love of doing it.

Christianity pleads for the renunciation of all class agitation which embitters one section of the community against another. He is no true democrat who would stir up the unskilled labourer against the skilled, the manual worker against the brain-worker, the man against his master, or any one class against another. The Christian religion has always, even in the days when the Roman Church held its undisputed sway,¹ favoured a free path for ability, courage, diligence, push, so that the child of the poorest woman may ascend to the highest rung of the ladder, if he deserves to do so. Sound religion bids men work for work's sake, and to rejoice in their love of work. For this reason it is quite conceivable that men might work to procure food and clothing for those who were in no sense connected with them by immediate blood-ties, although the natural instinct prompts us to work for our own, or for those to whom we are bound by ties of special friendship. But, in any case, the well-doing are not called upon to labour (even though labour be

¹ Romanists claim that two of their earliest Popes, Pius and Calixtus, were slaves (A. S. Barnes, *The Early Church in the Light of the Monuments*, pp. 21-2).

worth doing for its own sake) to minister to the idleness, that is the immorality, of others. In opposition to a certain foolish tendency which would discourage habits of thrift, the Christian religion would urge, on scientific grounds, habits of provision and preparation. Nature illustrates the principle on a grand scale. The superabundance of vegetation in a former geological age is our coal. Nature prepares and stores up chemical ingredients during the winter to make the soil fruitful in spring. She works through spring, summer, and autumn to provide food for the famine days of winter. Honest, cheerful, and ungrudging work, together with far-seeing habits of thrift, are essential to a sound democracy. Along with these, habits of regularity, taking sufficient rest, moderation in food and drink, and quiet living are urged. Industrious righteousness, in short, is what exalts a nation. Vicious ways of making money are to be ruthlessly condemned. On the other hand, a man who sins is himself to blame for his sin at least as much as his surroundings are, and we cannot ignore God's universal method revealed in the Universe, that a broken law of that Universe means suffering and punishment. With even greater care should the deserving and infirm poor be tended,

because to do so is at once in harmony with the uniform attitude of God towards His children,¹ and is a duty imposed by human sympathy and love.

The salvation of a democracy lies in the lofty intellectual and moral tone of its members. The links of personal character must be hammered by our own hands ; they cannot be bought in the market. Men are not saved wholesale. We welcome with gratification the democratic attitude towards the Bible. The inspiration of the Word is felt to be not a dogma accepted on grounds of mere authority, but an experience realized in the life of the humble man. Proof of the inspiration is feeling the touch of the Ultimate Cause of all. Modern democracy is alien in spirit to the priesthood.² It welcomes the minister, the man who by his word, example, and service of love, brings the infinite heart of God near to men. Just because we are convinced that the movement of civilization is towards a freer and more

¹ Cp. Wendt, *System der Christlichen Lehre*, vol. i. pp. 73 f.

² Lecky says, "Catholicism has greatly increased its power of acting on vast ignorant democracies" (*Democracy and Liberty*, p. 19). But it is only because they are "ignorant," that Romanism can do this. Wherever there is a truly enlightened democratic spirit the influence of the priest automatically diminishes and dies.

enlightened democratic ideal, so are we convinced that the future lies with the minister of the Reformed Church rather than with the Romanist priest. Christianity agrees with the democratic spirit which emphasizes the eternal value of man in this life, but would urge the need to remember that, as a child of God, man has a larger existence. Equally would Christianity emphasize the eternal value of the truly human gifts and attainments. Man is not a mere eater and drinker, not merely a shouter at rowdy football scrimmages, not a reckless gambler dealing in uncertainties—because in this Universe there is no such thing as an uncertainty if we only knew all the relative facts—not a chronic grumbler because he was not born the son of a lord or a millionaire, or because he cannot enjoy comforts without personal exertion. But virtue, culture, service, are the objects of a worthy man's life from first to last.

Christianity exults with democracy in the growing mastery of man over Nature's forces, and gladly, with democracy, anticipates the day when much less of a man's time will be needed to do ordinary work productive of the sheer necessities, and when there will be greater leisure for the cultivation of his moral, religious,

artistic, and scientific life. But the path to this is not the strike, but sanctified scientific methods.

At the same time, Christianity, as presented by the enlightened and progressive Reformed Church, would warn modern democracy against the delusion of thinking to find its true life in what we may call merely human communion. The brotherhood of man cannot stand alone. It must rest on the Fatherhood of God. Personal intercourse, the prayer of the closet, is essential to a sound democracy. The deepest, and most inspiriting thoughts are evoked when the individual soul seeks the Ultimate. The democracy which the Christian religion would seek is the rule of the people, which is also the rule of the people of God, all men working joyfully, reaping the reward of their labour, and encouraged in the enjoyment thereof, all co-operators, intellectually and morally, in the work of God. Jesus is the ideal democrat, at once son of the people and Son of God, the truest democrat, who lived and died for the highest good of the community, the truest democrat, who was also God's noblest aristocrat. The ideal democracy is that where every man aims at being an aristocrat in the intellectual, moral, and above all Christian sense. Antago-

nism there may be between Christianity and democratic ideals which, carried out, would spell the ruin of humanity; but never can there be antagonism between true Christianity and a really worthy democracy. The future of democracies, if they are to be of any real value to mankind, must be inspired by the freedom, enlightenment, and progressiveness of the Reformed Church.

CHAPTER II

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH (continued)

WE would now turn to the two most influential teachers of modern Germany, Nietzsche and Treitschke, who, however much they differ in other respects, are at one in the desire to substitute for real Christianity and the Christian God a resuscitated Odin and the religion of force. In spite of the fact that Nietzsche condemns modern culture generally, and indeed the entire culture of modern Europe, as degenerate,¹ he has nevertheless exercised a very great influence in the formation of modern Germanic culture. Napoleonism,² which is strongly

¹ Nietzsche maintains that the “Kultur-Staat,” as understood by modern Germans, is a contradiction in terms, that, with the striving of the German Empire to attain to supreme political power, real German culture has increasingly declined. *The Twilight of the Gods*, vol. i. pp. 54-5; *The Will to Power*, vol. i. p. 74, vol. ii. p. 237; Henri Lichtenberger, *The Gospel of Superman*, p. 64.

² Nietzsche says that we owe to Napoleon “almost all the higher hopes of this century.” *The Will to Power*, p. 23.

advocated by Nietzsche, was the accepted gospel alike of the German Army and Navy and indeed of practically the whole body of better-class young men of Germany in pre-war days. Their ethic was the *Herren-moral*. They were the new race of supermen. The Germanic people was the young giant among the nations, stronger, more vital, than any other existing race, in fact the most virile and most highly developed human type that Humanity has ever evolved.

What, then, is the doctrine which Nietzsche proclaims? He is a radical in the most literal understanding of the word. To him nothing that men have hitherto believed to be authoritative or true is sacred. Without hesitation he attacks and claims to overthrow the greatest of world-teachers. Plato is a mere artist who "placed appearance before Being."¹ In speaking of St. Paul, he says, "A God who died for our sins, salvation through faith, resurrection after death—all these things are the counterfeit coins of real Christianity, for which that pernicious blockhead Paul must be held responsible."² Coming to the moderns, Kant

¹ Cp. *The Will to Power*, vol. ii. p. 75.

² Cp. *Ibid.* vol. i. pp. 137, 138; *The Twilight of the Gods*, p. 193.

is regarded as the philosophical exponent of a degenerate Christian *morale* and contemptuously described as a "fatal spider."¹ In opposition to Darwin's theory of the "struggle for existence," Nietzsche asserts that that principle occurs "as an exception," and that "its result is unfortunately the very reverse of that which the Darwinian school seem to desire . . . that is to say, it is always to the disadvantage of the strong, the privileged, and the happy exceptions."² Nietzsche is the Ishmael among thinkers, the man whose hand is against every man and every man's against him. He is the iconoclast with mailed fist, alike in the sphere of philosophy and religion. He holds it to be unscientific to speak of two consecutive states, the first as cause, the second as effect.³ He tells us, "There is no greater error than that of making psychical and physical phenomena the two faces, the two manifestations of the same substance."⁴ "There are no such things as mind, reason, thought, consciousness, soul, will, or truth; they all belong to fiction, and can serve no purpose."⁵ Con-

¹ Cp. *The Twilight of the Gods*, p. 23. |

² Cp. *Ibid.* p. 71.

³ Cp. *The Will to Power*, vol. ii. p. 116.

⁴ Cp. *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 38.

⁵ Cp. *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 11.

sciousness is to be regarded as of secondary importance, and probably destined to disappear in favour of perfect automatism.¹ God, the world of the “thing-in-itself,” truth, the categorical imperative, are mere phantoms of the imagination. The only real world which man can know is the world of our desires and passions.² Even the atom of the physicists is a “subjective fiction.”³

The God of the Christians is a decadent, because He is “the pauper’s God, the sinner’s God, the sick man’s God.”⁴ The conception of God has hitherto been the greatest objection to existence.⁵ To Nietzsche, God is found out and dead.⁶ If the idea of God is to be retained at all, He is to be conceived of as “the condition of maximum power, an epoch, a point in the further development of the Will to Power.”⁷ In any case, each nation ought to have its own God, who must, so long as a nation is to remain virile and healthy, be the embodiment of the

¹ Cp. *The Will to Power*, vol. ii. p. 38.

² Cp. *The Gospel of Superman*, p. 116; *The Will to Power*, vol. ii. p. 18.

³ Cp. *The Will to Power*, vol. ii. p. 120.

⁴ Cp. *The Twilight of the Gods*, p. 145.

⁵ Cp. *Ibid.* p. 43.

⁶ Cp. *Thus spake Zarathustra*, vol. iv. pp. 7, 32, 99, 219.

⁷ Cp. *The Will to Power*, vol. ii. p. 122.

Will to Power.¹ He can never become cosmopolitan. That would mean that He was decadent, and in any case He must be both good and bad at the same time.

If the God of the Christians is a decadent, Christian ethic is nothing better than a slave *morale*, inferior even to that of respectable Paganism.² Christianity, with its contempt of the body, is the greatest mishap that has befallen mankind.³ “Christianity has sided with everything that is weak, low, or botched.”⁴ The first applied principle of Humanity should be to wipe out everything that is of that nature.⁵

The Church, as it exists, is the barbarisation of Christianity.⁶ Its atmosphere, even as portrayed in the Gospels, seems to have been drawn from some morbid Russian novel.⁷

The history of Christianity, as embodied in the Church’s life and teaching, has been “a gradual and ever coarser misunderstanding of

¹ Cp. *The Twilight of the Gods*, pp. 143–4.

² Cp. *Ibid.* pp. 46, 48, 187; *Thus spake Zarathustra*, pp. 52, 105.

³ Cp. *The Twilight of the Gods*, p. 108.

⁴ Cp. *Ibid.* p. 130.

⁵ Cp. *The Will to Power*, vol. i. p. 207, vol. ii. p. 297.

⁶ Cp. *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 176.

⁷ Cp. *The Twilight of the Gods*, p. 167.

an original symbolism.”¹ Nietzsche affirms that Jesus Christ was the one Christian and that the Gospel really died with Him on the cross.² While recognizing the “undeniable predominance of Catholicism to-day,” he not only denounces the German Reformation as a “recrudescence of Christian barbarism,” but agrees with Bismarck in believing that there is no longer any such thing as Protestantism.³

Free-will, the soul, and consciousness of guilt are to be regarded as mere inventions of the priests seeking to obtain power over the masses in order to use them for their own purposes.⁴ The Christian belief in personal immortality is described as an “impudent doctrine,” and “a great lie,”⁵ in place of which Nietzsche would put his “eternal recurrence.”⁶

Altogether Christianity has been Humanity’s greatest misfortune, a form of deadly Nihilism destructive of all that is best in the race and

¹ Cp. *The Twilight of the Gods*, p. 175.

² Cp. *Ibid.* p. 178

³ Cp. *The Will to Power*, pp. 71-2.

⁴ Cp. *Ibid.* vol. ii. pp. 211-13; *The Twilight of the Gods*, pp. 41-2.

⁵ Cp. *The Twilight of the Gods*, pp. 183, 185.

⁶ Cp. *Ibid.* p. 253; *The Will to Power*, vol. ii. pp. 431-2; “The universe is a monster of energy without beginning or end . . . Ever rolling back over incalculable ages to recurrence.”

for that reason deserving to be rooted out of human life.

In its place Nietzsche demands a form of society where free scope will be given to the strongest of human instincts, the "Will to Power," and the rule of the superman. By the supermen he means the conquerors, those who by nature are the aristocrats of the human race, whose God is the embodiment of the conqueror's will to power. Towards those who are not supermen there must be no expression of pity. The natural and desirable end for all such degenerates is annihilation. In keeping with his doctrine of the superman, he rejoices in the military development of Europe, advocates conscription, with the higher classes as officers, and roundly asserts that "when the instincts of a society ultimately make it give up war, and renounce conquest, it is decadent: it is ripe for democracy and the rule of shopkeepers."¹ The first duty of man is to "become hard,"² and no environment is healthy which does not make a man exercise his natural instincts of defence and aggression.³

¹ Cp. *The Will to Power*, vol. i. p. 104; vol. ii. pp. 189, 238.

² Cp. *Thus spake Zarathustra*, p. 262: "This new table, O my brethren, put I up over you: Become hard."

³ Cp. *The Will to Power*, vol. ii. p. 339.

Most people, reading Nietzsche's works for the first time, would have the same feeling that we would probably have if, when visiting one of our great picture-galleries one day, we saw one of the greatest, most beautiful works of art destroyed before our eyes by some irresponsible hooligan. This understandable feeling, however, must not blind us to certain commendable qualities of this remarkable man. There can be no doubt, for instance, that he was a man of colossal intellectual courage, nor can we hesitate to give him the credit of being in his own way a man desirous of reaching the bed-rock of truth, even though he himself denied the reality of any such thing as the truth.¹

We must also, according to the testimony of his intimate friends, regard him as being a man of pure moral instincts.² Students of his works will readily acknowledge his wide learning. These things being frankly conceded, we feel that we are justified none the less in condemning his whole system as one which ignores facts of fundamental importance, his method as illogical and unscientific, his results as impracticable in the stern world of reality. Can any one, for example, justify the position

¹ Cp. *The Will to Power*, vol. ii. p. 11.

² *The Gospel of Superman*, p. 13.

that the body, with its desires and passions, is the first reality, or that the one sound doctrine of life is to maintain a healthy body? No psychologist of standing would identify mind with body. If man were merely, or even primarily, body, is it conceivable that such works as Nietzsche himself has written could possibly have been produced? Mind is not only something that is to be considered as existing in its own rights, but as being more important in the life of man than mere body. Personality is a larger concept than body, and embraces instincts and powers which cannot be explained in terms of mere desire and passion, not to say protoplasm.¹ All science, every worthy interpretation of human existence, must postulate the leadership, guidance, and authority of mind.

Then, taking Nietzsche on his own ground of natural instincts, are not the distinction between right and wrong, the love of truth, the feeling of compassion, the craving for God, not as truly instincts of the human heart as Nietzsche's primordial instinct of the "Will to Power"? Multitudes of men, as capable of forming a just judgment as Nietzsche was, would at once admit that they were. We

¹ Cp. Jung, *Analytical Psychology*, p. 235.

frankly agree that Nietzsche's idea of a national god manufactured for each people would be a mere phantom ; but it is a very different matter with the God of all the Universe. In claiming that He is the fact of facts we make our appeal to realities, only asking that they should be considered in the scientific spirit.¹ How else can you explain the undoubted fact of human personality unless we postulate the Personality of God ? How otherwise can you explain the progressive movement of human history, except by recognizing the guiding hand of Providence ? Or, to bring the matter closest of all to ourselves, what form of human life, personal, family, national, tested by the stern test of pragmatism, can be expected to stand the hard trial of experience, unless these imply sincere belief in the Personal God ? It has been said that Nietzsche is a kind of pessimist who seeks deliverance from his pessimism by ceaseless effort ; but no amount of effort could ever redeem the mind of the follower of Nietzsche from a sense of the absolute futility of all human life and struggle.² Whatever accusa-

¹ Cp. A. J. Balfour, *Theism and Humanism*, p. 274: "God is Himself the condition of scientific knowledge."

² Haering is right when he affirms that Pessimism says that "the extinction of existence, as worthless, is the true end of moral action" (*Ethics of the Christian Life*, p. 50).

tion Nietzsche may bring against Christianity as being a system inevitably leading to Nihilism, no one who is really a Christian, no one who is convinced that the sole purpose of his life is to co-operate with the Personal God in what he feels to be a great uplifting and redeeming work, can ever be thrust down into the unavoidable depths of despair which Nietzscheism logically and irresistibly leads to. Tested by the irrefutable test of practical experience, Christianity stands, the system of Nietzsche falls.

Then as to the Christian ethic being nothing better than a slave-morale, does not Nietzsche entirely fail to show appreciation of the purpose and meaning of that ethic ? Do not the undeniable evidences of experience show that, without the salutary restrictions of Christian morals, the strength of those naturally strong is not likely to be long preserved ? Who are the strong in modern Britain, the physically, morally, and intellectually strong ? Are they not the children, and the children's children, of those who for generations have been marked by sterling Christian life and conduct ? The botched and degenerate are not the offspring of men and women of Christian character and descent. They are partly to be accounted for

by unwholesome environment and bad economic conditions, but far more because those who begat them and their fathers were the unrestrained slaves of those very passions and desires of the body which Nietzsche exalts to the supreme place of importance. It is not the ethics of Christianity, but failure to obey the wholesome commands of Christian morality, that produce the degenerate and the botched. Moreover, who that gives just consideration to the facts can fail to be convinced that, if there is a redemptive power in the world by which degeneracy and botching can be cured, that power lies in Christian life and precept ?

Even if Nietzsche's scheme of the dominance of the aristocratic supermen were put into operation, with free play to the exercise of the passions and desires of the dominant class, what would be the result ? Children would be born, sons of supermen fathers and the most attractive and robust of the women of the lower class. By the laws of heredity, and by paternal influence, would not these possess the dominant qualities of their father ?¹ Is it not the case that sons born thus are in many cases

¹ Cp. Jung, *Analytical Psychology*, pp. 156 ff ; J. Beard, *Science in Modern Life*, vol. v. pp. 46-7.

stronger men both physically and mentally than their parents?

Besides, all the facts go to show that the best brains are not the product of any one class. Given healthy surroundings, and still more the inestimable boon of a Christian upbringing, you may have the highest intellectual power, genius itself, produced. Sir William Robertson and David Lloyd George are examples of the truth of this. The glory of a truly Christian State is that it provides a free field for natural ability, whatever class it may spring from, and, at the same time, exercises a healing and strengthening influence, so that the way is always open that even degenerate types, by Christian life and discipline, may be elevated and redeemed physically, mentally, and morally. The system of Nietzsche, in short, signally fails when tested by the relevant facts—or, in other words, is unscientific.

That a new race of supermen is desirable, and also possible, may be at once granted. But that race can come into existence only by the fuller realization of the Christian ideal—a race of men physically strong, because they themselves and their forbears for generations have been men of sterling Christian morality and spotless personal purity, men strong yet

merciful, brave yet tender, intellectually virile, because the exponents of a sound Christian Creed which seeks the truth and nothing but the truth,¹ inspired by the belief that the Personal God is, and is interested, that humanity is capable at once of redemption and of progress, that all really good work is God's work, and that in the hearty and joyful performance of such work, men find at once their true vocation and the real gold of life.

Another German thinker, who, perhaps even more than Nietzsche, has exercised a pernicious influence on modern German thought, is Treitschke. He, unlike Nietzsche, is an historian rather than a philosopher; yet, behind his history, there is implied at once a philosophical, religious, and moral background. It is possible to discern a certain resemblance in the ultimate results reached by these two men, though in certain respects also they differ.

Nominally, Treitschke was a Protestant of a stern and rigid type. In reality, his religious outlook is rather that of the Old Testament than of the New. His creed is akin to that

¹ "Freedom to search for truth, coupled with the conviction that this free research would spontaneously lead to religion, is one of the characteristics of Protestantism" (Henri Lichtenberger, *The Gospel of Superman*, p. 18).

of Paul Kruger. He attempts the impossible, the reconciliation of the rule "might is right" with Christianity, and seeks to effect this impossibility in favour of his beloved fatherland. The God of Treitschke is not the Lord of the Universe or the Universal Father, but a kind of German Jehovah. In this he resembles Nietzsche in his doctrine that each nation should have its own God.

The German people is the modern Israel of God, foremost among the existing races, the last word in human culture and evolution. His almost insane hatred of everything British is to be explained by his belief that England is the great "robber State," holding world-wide possessions which she had neither the right to appropriate nor the virility to retain.¹ Part of the divinely appointed mission of Germany was therefore to wrest from Britain her ill-gotten gains, and to bring to them the blessing of the superior German culture. In regard to this, history has now given its stern verdict, and it is one totally different from what Treitschke desired.

Strictly speaking, the final authority, accord-

¹ Cp. *Deutsche Geschichte*, vol. v. p. 63; Cramb, *Germany and England*; von Bernhardi, *Deutschland und der nächste Krieg*, where war with Great Britain is regarded as inevitable.

ing to Treitschke, is not God, but the State—the State as the embodiment and vehicle of disciplined and scientific force.¹ Even international law must take a subordinate place to the State. In the last resort, the State is its own justification for whatever policy it may find advantageous to adopt.

In keeping with his general stand-point, is Treitschke's view of international and personal ethics. The conscience of the individual must be the conscience of the State.² In justification of this view he cites the precedent of ancient States, and the Papal supremacy, alike in the sphere of politics and morality, during the Catholic Middle Ages.

Then a similar policy is to be adopted in dealing with other nations. Treaties are certainly to be made with neighbouring countries ; but, from their very nature, these cannot be regarded as binding. New circumstances are bound to arise. Alike the offensive power and needs of nations will change in course of time. In view of this a State, according to Treitschke, a State which is conscious of

¹ Cp. *Politik*, vol. i. p. 33: "Die Macht ist das Princip des Staates"; pp. 34, 102: "Es folgt weiter aus dem Wesen des Staates als souveräner Macht, dass er einen Schiedsgerichter über sich nicht anerkennen kann."

² Cp. *Politik*, vol. i. pp. 74, 87-8.

considerable increase of power and prestige, is justified in forthwith breaking an existing agreement, and, if the other State refuses to comply, the stronger is justified in enforcing its will at the point of the sword.¹

Like Nietzsche, Treitschke glories in militarism and war.² The British plea for disarmament is scouted by him as an evidence of the senile decay of the British people. English athletics are not only no sufficient substitute for military discipline, but have brutalized the English mind, and have tended to the destruction of the spirit of chivalry.³ War is a biological law, and humanity's best medicine. No court of arbitration will ever sweep war off the face of the earth.⁴ The ideal of eternal peace is at once unjust, immoral, and impossible.⁵ Even the declaration of war is an empty form. In time of war, the individual citizen is bound to sink his own individuality in the all-important service of the State, and, in vindication of his view, he

¹ Cp. Hausrath, *Treitschke's Life and Works*, pp. 162-4, 167.

² Cp. *Politik*, vol. i. pp. 72-4.

³ Cp. Hausrath, *Treitschke's Life and Works*, p. 140.

⁴ Cp. Hausrath, *Treitschke's Life and Works*, p. 168. The same view is still held by Freytag-Loringhoven in his book *The Deductions from the World-War*.

⁵ Cp. Hausrath, *Treitschke's Life and Works*, p. 169.

cites the Saviour's words, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."¹ To show weakness is for the State to be guilty of the sin against the Holy Ghost.²

There is no doubt a striking similarity between the teaching of Nietzsche and Treitschke, if we make allowance for the fact that, while the one is a philosopher, the other is an historian, and the fact that, while the one looks more from the point of view of the individual, the other judges mainly from the stand-point of the State.

No student of Treitschke's works can fail to be impressed by the remarkable vigour and grasp of his intellect. He is one of the giants, but a giant so obsessed with the conviction of Germany's greatness and Germany's destiny, that he reaches conclusions which are at once prejudiced and immoral. While nominally a Protestant, he has never emerged, in his conception of the Deity, from the narrow groove of the Jew in the Book of Judges. Nay, it may even be maintained that he has stripped the Jewish Deity of much of His personality, made Him the personification of scientific force, em-

¹ Cp. *Politik*, vol. i. p. 75.

² Cp. *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 101.

bodied in the modern German Empire, and decked Him out in the imperial robes of the German Kaiser. When one tries to conceive of Treitschke's God, we involuntarily conjure up before our mind's eye the image of the German war-lord. Treitschke, like many other Germans, is wanting in the saving grace of humour when he makes such preposterous claims for the superiority of everything German. The ultimate issue of the world-war has proved that, brave and scientific as the German soldiers were, they were not the superior of the soldiers of those nations which Treitschke and his school contemptuously regarded as degenerate.

British soldiers, simply believing in the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, have proved in many a hard-fought fight that they are at least as courageous and devoted as the German hordes believing in Treitschke's Teutonic Odin.

The morality of the State which Treitschke advocates is to be condemned, alike on grounds of narrow-mindedness, and of sin against the spirit of justice.

By setting the claims of the individual State above international law he virtually brushes aside all the hard-won benefits of human

efforts, sustained over a long period of time, to secure a just and humanitarian relationship among the different races and peoples of the earth.

International law implies the honest endeavour of civilized humanity as a whole to establish a condition of international life by which justice can be done to man as man, and to nations as such, no matter how strong or how feeble they may be. To claim for any state, simply on the grounds of its power, the right to override international law is simply to degrade the larger humanitarian ethic and substitute in its place the immorality of the brigand State. It is moral atavism, akin to the ridiculous demand of the untutored Socialist asking for the abolition of money, or the equally ridiculous request that man, to secure his true well-being, must return to the savage state.

Equally, on grounds of justice, is Treitschke's view of treaties to be condemned. We may at once grant that treaties are not to be made as for ever binding. The wise policy is to make them for a definite number of years, and, at the end of that time, either renew them *simpliciter*, or come to some sensible arrangement as to their renewal in a modified form. But treaties once made, if they are to be of any value, can-

not be ruthlessly broken simply because one of the contracting nations in the meantime finds itself in an advantageous position to injure the other contracting nation, nor, if compliance to its demands be not forthwith made, ought the stronger Power straightway to let loose the dogs of war on that other nation.¹ The same principle is implied in making treaties that you find in any other business arrangement. There must always be a certain amount of risk involved. There is a chance of loss, and also a prospect of advantage, to those who enter on a solemn contract.

In any case, an undertaking made must be honourably carried through, so long as the agreement lasts. Without strict adhesion to this principle the world's business would come to a standstill. If Germany had not been a nation that had become phenomenally strong and rich, though by no means as great and wonderful as Treitschke and his followers supposed, would any one ever have heard of his

¹ The following proposition was affirmed at the Declaration of London in 1870: "The Plenipotentiaries of North Germany, of Austria-Hungary, of Great Britain, of Russia, and of Turkey, assembled to-day in conference, recognize that it is an essential principle of the law of nations that no Power can liberate itself from the engagements of a treaty, nor modify the stipulations thereof, unless with the consent of the contracting Powers, by means of an amicable arrangement."

ridiculous interpretation of the value and duration of treaties ? If, after the war, Germany is, for years to come, as she is certain to be, in a debilitated and gasping condition, while other Powers are in an increasingly prosperous state, we may be perfectly certain that nothing more will be heard, in Germany at least, of the doctrine that a nation is justified in breaking a treaty simply when it finds itself strong enough to do so, and without the slightest regard to the principle of abstract justice.

Altogether it is too late in the day for the manufacture of exclusively national gods. No nation is worthy to be called civilized which does not recognize, however patriotic its people may be, that even the most powerful of nations cannot override the larger claims of Humanity ; that right is right, and that, not only is might not greater than right, but that the true use of might is ever in the loyal service of right.

We claim for the Fundamentals that they are the ground-work of the Absolute Religion, viz. Christianity, when rightly understood and realized. The doctrine of Christ is final, absolute, and all-sufficient. The unbiased study alike of the ethnic religions and proposed modern substitutes for Christianity, such as

Positivism, Spiritualism, Christian Science, anti-Christian Socialism, we believe, must lead to the unqualified establishment of the claims of Christ. The Fundamentals remain. Fresh light is thrown upon them. The accumulated débris of centuries is being cleared away. The age-long error of our Churches has been the confusion of essential and non-essential. Neither Episcopalian nor Presbyterian Church government, for instance, is of the Fundamentals of the Faith. Souls can be saved, by the million, outside both these folds.

Many people to-day are nervous because, with the removal of the non-essentials, they think the essentials are being changed, and rendered insecure. But that is not so. Scotland to-day, industrial and populous as it was not in the eighteenth century, is still the same Scotland. You stand in the heart of Glasgow, in the midst of the hurrying crowds, and it does seem strange, and needs imagination, to realize that there, half a dozen generations ago, you might have heard the plover's cry. It is hard, in the midst of the smoke and noise, to picture the green fields and silver streams; but they all exist none the less. A few yards below the surface the crust of the earth remains the same, except for those silent chemical

changes which in any case would have taken place, as it was long before man dwelt on the earth. So it is with the great Fundamentals. They remain unaltered, except that we see them in increasing clearness. It is only the accidentals that vary. Dr. Flinders Petrie tells us that the greatest of the Egyptian pyramids was built by some hundred thousand men working for twenty years, raising up the huge blocks of which it is composed by a series of ascending platforms. In too many cases men have erred by confusing the temporary platform with the permanent pyramid. The priest has been accustomed to point to those who would remove the now useless scaffolding, shouting with tyrannical obstinacy and hysterical denunciation to a man who was thus doing good work, "Heresy," "Heresy," "Away with him," "Away with him." But the age of priests and ecclesiastical scaffoldings is passing. After it is gone entirely, men will appreciate better the eternal permanency of the Foundations laid by God Himself in Jesus Christ.

There are signs not wanting that the period of stress into which the whole Church of Christ has already entered, and which is likely to increase in its violence, will be the means, under the Providence of God, of making

Churchmen of all sects join hands and hearts round the things which really matter, the Fundamentals of the Faith. The power in the long run which is likely to do most for a union, which at present would be deemed fantastic, and outside the range of practical ecclesiastics, will not, we venture to think, be carefully chosen union committees, however anxious to be conciliatory, but the Providence of Almighty God exhibited in the form of common and salutary suffering.¹

Impelled by three historic movements, we are feeling our way down to the bedrock of the Fundamentals of Christ which are essential to the existence and redemptive influence of any Church. There was that spiritual revolt against Medievalism which we call the Reformation. There is to-day the increasingly vivid recognition of the truth that the Reformation has given us, not so much a rigid system of secondary doctrine, as a living principle, a leaven by which the whole mass of humanity is to be leavened, and trained, so as to realize the supreme and eternal worth of the essentials

¹ We believe that a life-and-death struggle between the organized forces of secularism and Christianity, similar to the struggle between early Christianity and paganism, is about to come.

of Christ. And there is the vast extension, deepening, and enlightenment of our knowledge in general, which, by its variety and multiplicity, is creating in men's minds a passion for a few definite guiding principles of life and destiny, which can be nothing else than the Fundamentals of the religion of Jesus, understood in their naked simplicity. We are told how in New York City, in order to get stability for the towering fabrics of that busy hive of men, it has been found necessary to go down to great depths, through sand, and mud, and subterranean streams, to the solid rock, and on that to raise a vast steel frame-work for the visible buildings to rest upon. So must it be in our practical religion, and in the guidance and outlook of our life: we must go down to the rock of the Fundamentals to find a secure basis. We may give our Theologies new names; but, if they be true Theologies, their foundation can be but one thing—the bedrock of the Divine Son. The foundation of all visible earthly buildings, from the lofty palace to the lowliest cottage, must ultimately rest on the ribs of old Mother Earth. The superficial aspects of our Theologies may vary somewhat, just as does architectural taste; but no Theology will stand long, nor for that matter

truly edify the soul while it does remain, except it rest on the Fundamentals, the eternal Foundation of the God-Man, the Incarnate Jesus, and what this central fact implies.¹

¹ Dr. J. G. Frazer says, in an impressive passage: "It may be that the elaborate theologies, the solemn rites, the stately temples, which now attract the reverence or the wonder of mankind, are destined themselves to pass away like all Olympus' faded hierarchy, and that simple folk will still cherish the simple faiths of their nameless and dateless forefathers, will still believe in witches and fairies, in ghosts and hobgoblins, will still mumble the old spells and make the old magic passes, when the muezzin shall have ceased to call the faithful to prayer from the minarets of St. Sophia, and when the worshippers shall gather no more in the long-drawn aisles of Notre-Dame and under the dome of St. Peter's" (*Golden Bough*, Pt. V. vol. ii. p. 335). We quite understand such an utterance from the lips of one enamoured of his fascinating study, and equally we are prepared to believe that many changes will take place in the forms of worship and in the external expression of man's faith. But the way of true progress is surely that which leads men down to a clearer, firmer grasp of the very foundations of the Universe and human life, those foundations which are unmistakably revealed only in the essential doctrines of Christ.

CHAPTER III

AUTHORITY AND IMMANENCE

I

THE spirit of the age demands a strict examination of every claim to be authoritative. The area of this demand embraces all departments of life and thought. There is in particular a prevailing hunger for certainty in regard to religion. The Church which can convince the people that its authority is good is in a strong position. One of the reasons why, in an age when Christian belief has been considerably undermined, many people have sought and found refuge in the Roman Church,¹ or in the High Churchism of the Church of England,

¹ Professor W. P. Paterson has rightly pointed out that the Roman Church, by its claims to an authority at once historical and sacramental, appeals to the mind of the average man (*The Rule of Faith*, p. 260). At the same time, it has to be remembered that it is the men who are better educated than the average man, the thinkers, the men inspired with the scientific spirit, who ultimately must determine what men will believe in religion, and the Church which will be in the long run in a strong position is that Church which can satisfy these men.

is just because both of these make claim to authority in a specially self-confident and dogmatic way. Unfortunately for them, there is a world of difference between the strength with which their claims to authority are made and the strength of the authority itself, when carefully and scientifically examined. The present age, at its best at least, is too wide awake to be fooled by any claim to authority, however vigorously that claim may be urged, unless satisfactory proof can be produced, showing that the claim is founded on truth.

The spirit of the age is not opposed to the right use of authority in religion or in anything else: it simply demands that the grounds of any claim to authority should be valid. If the demand is, on the one hand, that obsolete and ill-founded authorities should be thrust aside, on the other hand, there is an earnest desire that their place should be taken by those which are well authenticated. Without authority of some kind, life must be meaningless, chaotic, insane. Without authority, recognized and obeyed, civilization would become the chaos of hooliganism. The need of authority applies to all spheres of rational activity. We say that a proposition of Euclid is true on the authority of reason, or because we understand

it rationally. We accept the truth of an historical fact on the ground of expert evidence of its reality clearly presented to us. Even when we speak of doing something "by instinct," the authority implied *is* instinct. Religion is not at fault when it makes appeal to authority. Its claim is in keeping with the spirit which dominates all rational life. Where religion has failed is in too often not recognizing that, in the new order of things, the worth of many of the older standards of authority is not accepted. These have become as coin which is no longer current. What is demanded of any form of religion is that it should have authority for its doctrine and practice, and that the grounds for accepting that authority should be valid. The Roman Church, while affirming a general revelation of God in Nature and in Providence, maintains that there has been a special revelation which has been retained partly in a "written" and partly in what was originally an "unwritten" form.¹ These are the treasures of the Roman

¹ The "written" is the Scripture, including the Old Testament Apocrypha, in the Vulgate form, given by God and without error. The "unwritten" is that part of the oral teaching of Christ and His Apostles which is not contained in the Scripture, but was eventually written and is the key to the understanding of the first.

Church, which, through its head, the Pope, vicegerent of Christ Himself, is at once the infallible interpreter and exponent of doctrine. This is plausible, but, like many more plausible things, it does not bear strict examination.

The distinction between "written" and "unwritten" is not radical, because there was no written, at least as we have it in our Scripture, until some years had elapsed. The original teaching of Jesus was purely oral, and there is no evidence to show that the method of taking down His speech verbatim was employed by His disciples. Granted that there must have been much of the teaching of Jesus which has not been preserved in the Scripture, and that some at least of it has been preserved and eventually committed to writing, all that claims to be this must be subjected to most careful examination, and any claims to be authoritative must be vindicated in a manner which leaves no doubt.¹ And, in any case, two things

¹ The late Professor William James has exercised a great influence in leading the modern Christian mind to regard authority as valid only when it demonstrates its validity in the field of practical life and experience (*Varieties of Religious Experience* and *Pragmatism*). "Now it is assumed as an axiom that . . . the seat (of authority) is the Christian consciousness" (Beckwith, "Authority in Present-day Religious Teaching," *American Journal of Theology*, October 1912).

are certain : (1) Scripture, or the so-called “written,” must from its nature be much more authoritative than the so-called “unwritten,” and the worth of “unwritten” must be judged of from the testimony of the “written” rather than in the opposite way. (2) Whatever value there is in that which the Roman Church would have us understand by the “unwritten” is part of the heritage of the whole Church, not merely of one section of it.

The Church which is best able to interpret alike the “written” and the “unwritten” is that Church which has most truly the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth and Light. Can there be any doubt that the Church of the Reformed Faith is that Church ? The real seat of authority is God revealed in Jesus Christ, the Divine Son.¹ For this reason, whatever is certainly of Christ, spoken or done by Him in the days of His flesh, is authoritative for me as a Christian ; but not less

¹ “The Gospel, the Word of God, Revelation : these sublime and sacred words which in our schools are necessarily framed into formulas and dogmas, but whose inexhaustible wealth and divine content we must ever grasp anew, this spiritual reality which we only understand in the measure in which we surrender ourselves to its dominion—this is the religious authority in the evangelical and Protestant sense. This authority has a name in history—Jesus Christ” (Lobe-stein, *Einleitung in die evangelische Dogmatik*, p. 127).

authoritative is the manifest activity of the Resurrection Christ in His Church and in the souls of His saints to-day. The supreme authority for the modern Christian is not tradition,¹ not the Bible regarded as verbally inspired,² not the doctrine prevailing in a Christian Church at a given time.³ When one speaks of the "principles" of Jesus Christ as the authority we approach nearer to an understanding.⁴

Ritschl maintained that, in spite of elements of diversity, which are obviously present in the writings of the New Testament, there is nevertheless an essential unity, and that this, rightly understood, is authoritative in all matters as touching the doctrine of the

¹ The Roman view.

² The view of Protestants at the time of the Reformation. The view that the Bible as it stands is our supreme authority still finds advocates. H. T. Sell, *Bible Study of Doctrines*, p. 5; The American Series, "The Fundamentals." A very common view is that the final authority is to be found in the Scriptures, not as they appear in any modern version, but as they are in the original text, scientifically edited, and then interpreted under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, or according to their divinely intended meaning.

³ Cp. Schleiermacher, *Der Christliche Glaube*; also his follower, Schweizer.

⁴ "There are limitations in the precepts of Jesus, as there are round His beliefs; but behind His precepts lie His principles" (J. Estlin Carpenter, *The Relation of Jesus to His Age and Our Own*, p. 65).

Christian Church. We might put it more explicitly, and say that the secret of this unity is the Personality of Christ,¹ who, rightly understood, is “the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.” The supreme authority for the Christian Church is just Christ, the Christ of the days of His flesh, the Risen Christ whose Spirit is in His Church now, and who is continually leavening the heart of the world, and leading His saints by the still waters and in the midst of the green pastures.

Jesus Christ reveals Himself to the Christian believer as the Supreme and Final Authority concerning all that has to do with his life and destiny. He reveals Himself to the Christian in the field of personal experience. It is being more and more clearly recognized that all real religion implies actual experience, communal or individual. Religion is experience throughout, from the exalted life of Jesus down to that of the lowliest and most ignorant believer. God has revealed Himself religiously, but in the sphere of actual human experience. A piece of doctrine becomes

¹ We would not only affirm, with Ritschl, that “the starting-point in theology is the revelation of God in Christ attested in the Scripture” (W. P. Paterson, *The Rule of Faith*, p. 156); but that the supreme authority and final court of appeal must always be the full Personality of Christ.

valuable to a man only when realized in his own personal religious life. Buying a mathematical book does not make a man a mathematician : to become this, he must master the contents of that and other mathematical books. Religion has no real value, no commanding authority in us, except it becomes a real part of our life, our own undoubted experience. The infallibility of the Pope, for instance, can never have any religious value to an enlightened Protestant, simply because he knows that human infallibility is what he cannot possibly experience. He knows that he himself is fallible, that indeed, at the very foundation of all that is truly sincere and worthy in his religious life, there is the profound sense of personal shortcoming and unworthiness. The certainty of personal fallibility is one of his surest convictions, and, because of this, he knows that the mere man who claims to be infallible must either be self-deceived or a charlatan.

The authority of the Christian life is God as we know Him in our own personal experience through Jesus Christ. It is an authority which is not antagonistic to any other legitimate authority, such as that of science, the State, secular education, or history. Rather would

the Christian see implied behind all these the far-reaching influence of his own supreme authority, God.

The authority of God revealed to His children is not merely an authority whose reality is known through the testimony of men of the past. Rather is it an authority whose scope and significance is being at once freshly and increasingly made known in human life. For this reason the recorded religious experience of the knowledge of the supreme authority in any past age can never be the final word for succeeding generations of men. It can at best be a guide and inspiration. Its claims must be tested at the bar of our own living personal life. The postulate of all religious experience is living communion with God. We have at best only man's version of God's communion with him. This applies even to the New Testament writers reporting the utterances of Christ. Language itself is a version. Authority in religion, to be a vital power, must realize itself in life, in progressive communion between the soul of the Divine and the soul of man. The supreme authority in religion is not the Bible *in toto*. This is one of the marks distinguishing the enlightened Christianity of to-day from the

Christianity of the Reformers. We have outgrown much of the Bible morality, for instance polygamy,¹ and the ruthless extermination of enemies.² Yet in these we recognize conditions of the then religious man, not part of his actual religious experience in communion with God. We cannot, with the Reformers, rest on the infallibility of the written Word taken as a whole. Still less can we agree with the Roman position, which since 1870 centres its infallible authority in the one supreme head, the Pope, a claim to infallibility which has sprung out of, and ultimately rests on, the claim to infallibility of the Church. Of course, the Pope would hold an impregnable

¹ It has to be remembered that even in the Old Testament days, the great prophets, Hosea, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and saints like Job, were husbands of one wife. A. B. Davidson, *Biblical and Literary Essays*, p. 311. It is certain that there will be in the future far-reaching changes in regard to marriage. Increasingly the modern State must take wise steps to secure the birth and proper upbringing of a virile race. For that reason we anticipate that there will be legislation ensuring (1) the prevention of the reproduction, through marriage or otherwise, of the offspring of diseased and degenerate people; (2) that all healthy men and women, who otherwise might prefer to remain single, should be compelled to marry or be specially taxed.

² The German treatment of the Belgian civilians was practically the revival of the barbarous practice of extermination; but Germany, by her methods, has shown herself to be a "monster" in modern civilized life.

position, if he were able to demonstrate clearly to the world that he, in a unique way, has the key to the mind of Christ. But, tried by the test of experience, he cannot vindicate this claim. History is the stern witness to the truth that papal judgments have again and again proved themselves to be fallible, and the immediate evidence of our own experience is that to be human is to err, that humanity and infallibility are two incompatible facts.

The one ultimate, supreme, and only infallibility is God, and God to us is God as we know Him through Jesus Christ. We, at best, are the fallible pupils of the infallible Master. Inasmuch as no written word, however truly inspired, no Church, nor any merely human head of any Church, can ever adequately express the entire mind and will of the Divine, infallibility is only an ideal, towards which the Church and the individual must seek to approximate, and will approximate, in proportion as God is known, loved, and served in their practical experience.

Doubtless certain great principles of Christ are infallible—that is, they can be realized in our conscious religious life as indubitably true; but then no one can claim to be infallible in

limiting the scope of application or interpretation of these principles. There are many gleaners in the Lord's harvest-field. Every soul which is in true communion with God through Christ adds his sheaf. No man, book, or Church should ever interfere with the free development of the soul in this life of fellowship. What is permanently valuable in religion is genuine religious experience. Even as regards the Bible this is true. Alike to Jesus and Paul, the ritualistic law was abrogated. For us the geological, biological, and even, in a sense, the historical, and, generally speaking, the pseudo-scientific background of the Bible have passed away. God in Christ is the authority of modern enlightened Christianity ; but by God in Christ we mean the Jesus-Spirit of Him who lived in Galilee, and, humanly speaking, died nearly 2,000 years ago, the Jesus-Spirit which has been in the world since, is in the world now, and is destined to appear in ever clearer illumination. We frankly admit the limitations of the days of His flesh—limitations of language, philosophy, customs, and even in the everyday conception of the world, history, and nature. Jesus did not tell us that the electron was the unit of matter, or give us a fraction of that knowledge concerning

geology which may be learned from Chamberlain and Salisbury's text-book. No, but He is authoritative in religion, because in His Personality there are set forth three eternal principles, in accordance with which He always lived, and which are in fact the foundations of His personality : (1) that the eternal Basis of the Universe is the Supreme Personality, God ; (2) that this eternal Personality is good, alone good ; and (3) that He is our Father, whose uniform attitude towards His children is love, and that, if we are to be worthy children, our duty is to live a life of endless gratitude to Him. All modern knowledge tends to convince us of the truth of the first of these. On no other basis can we adequately explain our own personality and place in the Universe.¹ Authoritative is the second to all time. If we want to know whether our action is good, the supreme test is to try it by the character of God as He is known in Jesus Christ. Any

¹ " It has been made clear by the argument up to this point that minds like ours, planning and guiding matter to ends, even though immensely greater than ours, could not be the main directors of the universe. They rest on arrangements below them ; they indicate in every feature fuller forms of completeness above them. Still their main character, the consciousness of self, might indicate to us something of the structure of reality " (B. Bosanquet, *Individuality and Value*, p. xxvii).

deed of ours, no matter what other ethical standards it may satisfy, which is felt not to be in harmony with the Will of God, must be denounced as wrong. And equally valid and eternal is Christ's third principle—the religious man must be eternally grateful, for only in the life of increasing gratitude can he realize his life as his Father's child.

When these three principles of Jesus' life and personality are living forces in our own experience, we know at once that here is an authority which cannot be disputed. Outside these three principles of God revealed in the Personality of Christ, there is no final authority in religion. No man is infallible, no scientist, philosopher, student of life, soldier, or parliamentary leader. There is no such thing as an infallible Church, or head of a Church. Papal infallibility, to the enlightened Christian of the Reformed Church, if we speak of it in the most lenient way possible, is a childish fancy ; if we speak perfectly frankly, is a cunning ecclesiastical weapon invented and used for ends of power by a Church which has decidedly a record of unscrupulous dealings. It may be laid down as a general rule that you can measure a Church's divorce from the truth by the loudness and emphasis of its claims to in-

fallibility. To recommend any one who is in spiritual doubt to go to Rome is as wise as it would be to advise a man suffering from tooth-ache to commit suicide as the best way of getting relief. For a Protestant to join the Church of Rome in order to get relieved of the burden of spiritual doubts is to adopt the policy of the pursued ostrich which buries its head in the sand. No book, confession, creed, or Church can honestly claim to be an absolutely infallible authority: God alone, in the ever-living, soul-redeeming, world-conquering Spirit of Jesus Christ, made known to us by living personal religious experience, is the one supreme authority in religion, and indeed in the regulation of our whole personal and social life.

The position of the modern Reformed Church might be summarized as follows: (1) God, as He is known in Jesus Christ¹ to the child of faith and life through Him, is our Supreme and Final Authority in all matters religious, in all that has to do with personal salvation. (2) A most important record of what Jesus taught in

¹ The supreme authority is not merely the personal character of Jesus Christ as such (Peabody, *Jesus Christ and the Social Question*, p. 33); but God revealed progressively through the eternal Christ, the Christ Incarnate, Risen, and Ever-living in the child of grace. Rashdall, *Philosophy and Religion*, pp. 125 ff., 139.

regard to God and Himself as God's Son is contained in the New Testament writings, which require, however, to be sympathetically yet scientifically studied in order to obtain an accurate knowledge of the doctrine of Jesus. All well-authenticated doctrine of Jesus is naturally authoritative. (3) Jesus Christ, as the Living Lord, has continued to reveal Himself progressively in every child of faith, and in every true branch of His Church. For this reason the conception of the authoritative revelation of God, in Jesus Christ, is far larger than that held by the Roman theologians or even by the leaders of the Reformation. There can be really no limits set to the authoritative revelation of God in Christ. (4) This fresh and progressive revelation of the Personality of God in the ever-living Christ not only helps to explain the difficulties in the statement of Jesus' Teaching recorded in the New Testament, but purifies it of what may have wrongly been associated with that teaching. (5) The experience of Christians of former ages, and acting under the authority of God in Christ, may have been embodied in the form of written creeds or confessions.

These are ever to be treated with respect and used in so far as they can be useful. But it

must always be borne in mind that no generation of Christians can think to lay hold of the whole riches of the Divine Nature, that God in Christ increasingly reveals the hidden wealth of His character, that every Church which is a living, progressive Church will form its own creed, in which it embodies its own new, and presumably larger, revelation of the authoritative mind of God in Jesus. And, inasmuch as the individual saints,¹ who in a special way have entered into the secrets of God, will have a larger and truer creed than the rank and file of Church members, the saints must ever lead the way in helping the Church to the expression of its new and truest, because fullest creed. The modern Reformed Church clearly recognizes that to think of any creed as final, and not admitting of improvement, is identical with saying that God is limited in His power to convey to us more of the inexhaustible riches of His nature, or that we, His children, are incapable of grasping anything beyond a

¹ As illustrating this, G. Tarde, when opposing the view of Spencer, that "le véritable gouvernement, c'est l'opinion commune," goes on to say: "Avec 20 orateurs ou chefs de gentes dans la main, on gouvernait dans l'antiquité une ville de 2,000 citoyens, par exemple: rapport de 1 à 100. A présent, avec 20 journalistes dévoués ou achetés, on gouverne dans certains cas 40 millions d'hommes: rapport de 1 à 200,000" (*Les Transformations du Pouvoir*, p. 14).

very limited knowledge of the Personality of God. Here, as elsewhere, the Reformed Church stands for freedom, progress, life, a worthy conception alike of the dignity of God and man.

II

When we speak of the Immanence of God, we mean God in all things, in what we know, and in the vast unknown to us, yet existent, in the physical Universe, in living creatures, alike in organic¹ and inorganic matter, and in the human soul, the conscious ego, God in these in such a way that they could not be conceived of as existing except God was in them, the Presence felt in natural beauty,² in the sunset and the spring flower, the reality associated with the poetical feeling that somehow there is a divinity in things, the postulate of faith that we can think of the Universe only as originating in and being sustained by an Omnipotent and Omnipresent Personality.

But the modern doctrine of Naturalism³

¹ The conception of God as immanent is “ implicit all along in the idea of evolution ” (Jones, “ Divine Immanence,” *Hibbert Journal*, July 1907).

² “ Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man.”

WORDSWORTH, “ *Tintern Abbey*.”

³ Cp. Haeckel, *Last Words on Evolution*.

has cast grave doubts on the simpler old-fashioned idea of Immanence. If the Universe is a great machine which has simply been evolved, what room is there for the Personal God ? It will not do, in order to justify our belief in the Immanence of God, to refer back to the Gospel, the Apostolic Fathers,¹ or the Patristic writers. We must meet the exponent of Naturalism on his own ground. We must appeal to facts. Now, what is the starting-point of all our knowledge ? It is human personality—the fact of facts, upon which all our theories of the Universe depend. Of course, it is possible to affirm that there has been a direct revelation of the Divine Personality. But this is what the upholders of Naturalism would say you cannot prove. It is a mere hypothesis, unless you can show proof from another point of view. The conscious life of man, human personality, is the point from which we must commence. It is true that what we call the physical Universe existed before we awoke to conscious life, and will almost certainly exist, after we are gone,

¹ One may rightly make this statement, without going to the extreme of speaking, as Dobschütz does, of "the rambling spiritual poverty" of the Apostolic Fathers. Dobschütz, *Christian Life in the Primitive Church*, p. 372.

for other intelligences, similar to our own, to know. But, on the other hand, the existence of what we call the physical is known to us only through our consciousness. Our consciousness, our personality, is certainly a fact of the Universe in which we live. It would be unscientific to ignore its existence. The person who knows is surely as great and certain a reality as the material substance known. In the ultimate explanation of things, the knower has surely at least as valid a claim to be a part as the material substance known. For this reason the Universe cannot be described as a mere machine, because in the Universe there is conscious life. Living, and knowing, and having our being in the physical Universe of matter and energy, yet mentally we rise out of these, for we know what they are. Mentally, spiritually, we live in something higher than that which can only be known as part of the material Universe,—in the all-embracing Intelligence, God. The conscious personality of man, associated as it always is in man in this life with a physical body, is evidence for the Personality of God associated with that which we call the physical Universe. As there is the spiritual and physical united together in man, so is it in the Universe. A man's soul per-

meates his body, so God permeates the Universe of which we are a part, and this is why Paul rightly says, "in Him we live and move and have our being."

What the exact relationship between the Personal God and the physical Universe is, we cannot say, for the simple reason that even the New Physics do not tell us what matter ultimately is. But the analogy from the human spirit living in, and permeating, and even to a certain extent determining the human body, is an analogy which helps us to understand the Immanence of God. There is, of course, a difference in this, that our bodies are materially part of the physical Universe, whereas our spirits are more akin to the Spirit of God because of personal freedom. Our spirits possess a more independent standing relatively towards God than do our bodies relatively to the physical Universe. Given these four—the Personal God, the physical Universe, the personality of man, and the physical body—in what sense is the first immanent in the others, so that the unity of the Universe should be maintained? As our bodies are wholly part of the physical Universe, the problem becomes reduced to the Immanence of God, (1) in the physical Universe, (2) in

human personality. Various answers have been given.

There is (1) Atheism, which is ruled out of court, because it is a virtual denial of the reality of human personality as a fact. It is a denial of the evidence of personality by personality itself. (2) Polytheism and Dualism are also at once set aside because of the rational demand for unity. The ultimate explanation of the Universe must be one. (3) Agnosticism must logically resolve itself into Atheism on the one hand, or fall back into Deism, Theism, Pantheism, or Monism on the other, because it either must deny the fact of human personality so as to affirm the truth of Atheism, or it must acknowledge that God at least embodies what exists in human personality, and to that extent is not an unknowable God. (4) Deism is a virtual denial of immanence, except in the sense that we recognize the personality of Velasquez in the *Maids of Honour*. Deism is akin to Naturalism in its conception of the Universe as a machine, with this difference, that Naturalism thinks of the machine as having not only continued through ages to work smoothly, but as having evolved itself, and set its works agoing. If we speak of the Universe as a system evolved under physical laws, even

physical laws require an explanation as to their ultimate origin, and it is not enough that there should be laws: we must explain why they are put and kept in operation. If we speak of the Universe as a machine, it is such a machine, under the theory of Naturalism, as no human mind could evolve, or conceive of as being evolved. Our conception of a machine is something which, however perfect, is ever liable to go wrong, and needs not only the brain and the hand to make it, but to keep it right. The explanation of the physical Universe lies deeper than the explanation of Naturalism would show.

(5) Pantheism affirms mere immanence. It corresponds with the materialistic view of human personality as being identical with the physical organism. But just as the human mind can conceive itself, can think of what happens before, and after, and outside the physical Universe existence of its own vehicle, the body, so the Personality of God must be conceived of as having a certain transcendence, and independent life, which Pantheism virtually denies. (6) Monism,¹ as

¹ Monism is the theory that mind and matter are "co-ordinate aspects, manifestations, or functions of one reality" (Illingworth, *Divine Immanence*, p. 3).

explained by Haeckel and his school, expressly explains the unity of the Universe along materialistic lines. Mind is but a mode of matter. Immanence, in this case, is only the physical interpenetrating itself. The theory is met at the very outset by the insurmountable difficulty that the sole key to the material Universe is mind, and that mind, whose testimony must be trusted, if we are to make any beginning, affirms its own difference in nature from the material known through it. Materialistic monism cannot explain self-consciousness.

(7) Theism, which starts from the fact of human personality, mind, conscious life, and, on purely scientific grounds, demonstrates, from the fundamental reality of human personality, the Personality of God ; which uses, as far as it is possible to use it, the analogy of a human personality in a human body, to explain the Immanence of the Personality of God in the physical Universe *in toto* ; which affirms a certain transcendental freedom in God as in the personality of man, which recognizes our inadequate powers to describe fully the relationship between the Personality of God and the physical Universe in which He is immanent, because of our imperfect understanding, as yet, of what is meant by the physical,—that is the

most rational and scientific view.¹ From the fact that the key of all knowledge is the mind, the personality, if there is to be agnosticism, it must be agnosticism as to the ultimate nature and possibilities of matter, rather than of mind. We cannot, without being misleading, say either that the physical Universe is God's body or God's work; but that He is in the Universe in a way analogous to our being consciously in the body, and that the Universe is moulded by Him, and that, just as when we spiritually and biologically cease to live in the body, then the body as a living body is dead; so the Universe would be unthinkable as a knowable Universe, apart from God immanent in it. Yet must we not think of the Personality of God as being separable from the physical Universe, in the same way as ours can. Our continued existence in the body depends on the strictest obedience to Nature's law. We walk on the narrowest of paths, with a gulf on either side. A few grains of arsenic swallowed, a leading artery severed, the injection into the veins of a small quantity of what would be harmless as food, and the

¹ "If we think things out instead of stopping half-way, we are driven to a theistic conception" (Gwatkin, *The Knowledge of God*, p. 13).

partnership is dissolved. Ours is a death-haunted existence. Death blows at you, into your lungs, in the March wind. He grins out of the water that you drink, and the food that you eat. He stares in at you as you sit in the railway carriage or the tram-car. He threatens to grip your heart and silence its beat for ever at two o'clock of the morning, when the tide of life is at its lowest ebb. But mark, dissolution comes only when Nature's conditions of life are not fulfilled. We live in God. Dissolution, in the case of what we call God, and the physical Universe, is impossible. Immanence and existence are not separable. The Immanence of God in all things is implied in everything that we do. It does not, however, contradict free-will. A Rodin embodies his personality in a piece of statuary, or a Hardy in *The Dynasts*; so that an expert could guess who the author was in either case. Yet, all the time, they are working with the Immanence of God implied. Our conscious immanence in the body is not the measure of our vital activities. The laws of sound digestion work without conscious direction. We are not even aware of their existence. Disease, and consequent pain, reveal to us consciously what went on hitherto in our subconscious life.

The stone does not know itself; but it is understandable. It is a material body made up of electrons which have combined and cohere according to certain laws—meaning by law a uniform method according to which things take place, the nearest analogy to which, in our own case, being where we do things consistently according to reason.

The Immanence of the Divine Personality is of the very essence of that which we call physical. The analogy between our immanence in the body and the Divine Immanence in Nature and ourselves therefore falls short at a certain point, for the reason that our body is part of the physical Universe, and also because that physical Universe cannot be conceived of apart from the embodiment in it of God. In man we have two parts: (1) the conscious, and, to a certain extent, in virtue alike of consciousness and free-will, independent life associated always with brain in ordinary life, yet not to be identified with brain, as it is quite conceivable that we may have a development on the lines of the Röntgen rays by which we may be able to see our own brain in active operation. (2) The unconscious sub-structure which is part of the general physical existence, which is upheld for us, and of which we are in part not even

conscious, and yet without which we could not exist, which depends upon the Ultimate Cause, God, who is immanent in us mentally and physically as in all things. Our consciousness depends on our brain, our brain on the blood-supply and nerve energy which feed it, our blood and nerve energy on the chemical constituents which compose these, the chemical constituents are made up of electrons—God is immanent in all. Upon the Divine Immanence depend the steps leading up to our personal conscious life.

But, if God be immanent in all things, so that when you take a flower in your hand, you, as it were, touch God, what about the moral difficulty ? Goodness and kindness are to be found in the world, in man¹ and also in the lower animals ; but how much there is which seems to exclude the idea of a good, a kind, a moral God !² There is the tiger-spring, the poison draught, the assassin's knife, the alligator's snap, the sensualist's cruel deception

¹ Even of the native Australians we read : “ The treatment of children is universally kind. . . . They never chastise their children ” (N. W. Thomas, *Natives of Australia*, p. 179).

² It is doubtless true that “ power rather than goodness is the attribute of the Divine Nature which first impresses itself on the human mind ” (Inge, *Truth and Falsehood in Religion*, p. 8).

and abandonment of innocence. Yet there are two facts of experience which go far to help us towards an understanding: (1) evolution, with the needed element of struggle, sacrifice, and even painful death; and (2) there is moral independence and free-will in man. It is easy to understand that, if man had been placed in a world where there was no danger, no difficulty, certain important elements in his nature, such as carefulness, precaution, and even self-control would have been less marked, or even entirely absent.¹ The problem of one living animal preying upon another is as hard for the biologist to explain as for the moralist. Why should species, springing from the same primitive cell, in course of development, turn and rend each other? Why should the life-producer come to be a life-destroyer, by devouring, in a sense, itself? Suffering, pain, death even by violent means, are not necessarily immoral. They may sometimes seem so from the point of view of the individual member; but, in the long history of the race, they work out for moral good and progress. Then, again, as far as human wrong is concerned, the seat of its

¹ Disasters, through earthquake, for instance, have stimulated men to discover the structure of the earth's crust, and to locate the faults.

origin is in the will. Somehow or other, man has freedom to make moral choice. The gift we can only think of as originating somehow in the Personality of God. Moral freedom is an instrument which can be used in conformity with the Will of God, or in a very different way. There is no question about our living in God in the general sense ; it is another story whether, through self-surrender on our part, God lives in us. You are living in Great Britain ; but you might be a most disloyal British subject, *i.e.* Great Britain may not be living in you. Moral freedom in man is the condition necessary to realize a true ethical life. There is an immanence by which God is in your heart's beat, in the contracting muscles of your hands as they are clasped in prayer, in your morning smile, and in your last sigh ; but in an altogether deeper sense is He immanent in the heart which has been voluntarily surrendered to His Will. All the great religions—Egyptian, Indian, Hebrew, Greek, and Roman—have felt the presence of God in the physical world : Christianity teaches, as none other does, that the truest realization of the Immanence of God is when the human soul surrenders itself to God, voluntarily realizes the truth of Paul's famous saying, “in Him we live and

move and have our being.”¹ God is not merely immanent in the redeemed soul ; but the redeemed soul is consciously immanent in God. Religion is not supernatural in the sense that God exists apart from Nature, or Nature apart from God ; but in the sense that there can be a conscious communion between God and my soul in a way that there cannot be between God and a stone. God is in the stone ; but the stone can never know it. We are conscious that God is in us, and that we can exist only in God, and that by an act of voluntary self-surrender we live in Him in an ever higher ethical sense. The true distinction in religion is not between natural and supernatural, but between personal religion, *i.e.* religion whose data are facts of the personal life, and the religion whose data are impersonal on the one side at least. The Divine Son speaking to me is personal religion. The religious message of the spring-blossom of the wild-cherry tree is impersonal religion. It is a message from that which is not conscious of my existence, although I am conscious of its. It is possible, however,

¹ “Science seems to teach in the highest and strongest manner the great truth which is embodied in the Christian conception of entire surrender to the Will of God” (Huxley, *Life and Letters*).

that all religion may be personal, if we understand God to be communicating to us consciously through the unconscious cherry-tree. In any case, all conscious recognition on our part of the Personality of God present in the unconscious world, in sentient beings, and in our own intellectual and moral life, is religious knowledge, from which, in the normal mind, corresponding religious activities should follow. God in everything should inspire us to do everything for God.

“Our wills are ours, we know not how ;
Our wills are ours, to make them Thine.”

The study of the Divine Immanence naturally leads on to the consideration of the Kingdom of Man and the Incarnation.

CHAPTER IV

THE KINGDOM OF MAN AND THE INCARNATION

I

FROM consideration of God Immanent in the entire universe we pass, in logical sequence, to the study of man, the kingdom of man, and to the most important event in the history of that kingdom, the Incarnation of God in Christ Jesus.

Modern science confidently asserts that, in the long process of evolution, what we understand by man, that is a being possessing the standard required in the human brain, 1,000 cc. or more, was certainly in existence by the commencement of the Pliocene period, approximately one million years ago. At the same time, Keith says, "There is not a single fact known to me which makes the existence of a human form in the Miocene period an impossibility," and further shows that there is reason to believe that "a period of about two million years has elapsed since the separation of the human stem."¹

¹ Cp. Keith, *The Antiquity of Man*, pp. 510-11.

It has been proved, moreover, that the modern type, along-side of a much cruder,¹ has persisted through long ages of time.² We are probably safe in affirming that man, with the necessary size of brain, and endowed with the gift of elementary speech, was on the earth at least one and a half million years ago.

Further, there is evidence to show that man, at a very early period of his existence, had some form of religion, and performed religious rites, particularly in connection with the dead, which indicate that he believed in personal survival.³

The kingdom of man, as we think of it existing in the world now, is composed of some sixteen hundred millions of human beings, endowed with consciousness and personality, bearing upon them marks which show that they are the descendants of a long line of ancestors, who, through a chequered history

¹ The Neanderthal man, who is now regarded not as an ancestral form of modern man, but as "an extinct and separate species of humanity" (Keith, *The Antiquity of Man*, p. 149).

² The Tilbury, Langwith, Galley Hill, and Piltdown skulls are all of the modern type. Keith, *The Antiquity of Man*, pp. 30, 89, 183, 396, 502. Professor Sergi holds that "men of the modern type were evolved as long ago as the beginning of the Pliocene period."

³ Cp. Keith, *The Antiquity of Man*, p. 117.

of struggle and suffering, gradually became what we designate as man.¹ When or how² the first of this race of men appeared on the earth cannot, in the nature of things, be indicated, except in an approximate way. What modern science says in this regard has already been noted. The tendency has been, with our increase of scientific knowledge, to push the date of man's appearance in the world ever further back.

What was formerly thought of as the time of man's creation is now regarded as quite late. The Historians' History, though treating of the oldest known nations of the world, is an account of modern men and events. Abraham and Isaac, Moses and Rameses II. are men of yesterday. The oldest written records of human activity, the inscriptions of Egypt and Babylonia, are only part of the last stage of this marvellous history of the kingdom of man. By far the greater portion of the annals of mankind are lost, or are but dimly read in relics of ancient tongues, customs and arts. The modern science of Anthro-

¹ Cp. Sir Oliver Lodge, *The Substance of Faith*, p. 1.

² According to Professor J. A. Thomson, the so-called law of Biogenesis may possibly be shown to be untrue, and it may be proved that life can be produced out of inorganic matter. *Progress of Science in the Century*, p. 50.

pology has presented to us many pages of the older obtainable history, which never could have been supplied from the most hoary inscriptions.¹

Any thoughtful person, standing in a cosmopolitan crowd, gathered from the ends of the earth, British, Italians, Greeks, Czechs, Armenians, Indians, Japs, Negroes, must have asked himself, What is the reason for these varieties of type ? Did they spring from one common stock, or from several ? If from one common stock, why the difference ?

The oldest existing portraits of men, Assyrians, Egyptians, Hittites, Amorites, prove that, within the last four or five thousand years, there has been no radical change in type.² The red-brown Egyptians depicted on the tombs of the kings at Thebes are facially the same men as the Egyptians of the twentieth century ; the Amorite has his modern representative in the Kabyle of North Africa. At the same time, zoologists advance cogent reasons for believing that originally there was one common ancestor, or at least that man

¹ Specially, in this connection, have we to mention the gigantic work of J. G. Fraser, *The Golden Bough*, etc.

² Cp. C. J. Ball, *Light from the East*. Flinders Petrie, *A History of Egypt*.

sprang into being in one region.¹ In this regard the Bible tradition of Adam and Eve is therefore, generally speaking, true. But the separation into persistent types must have taken place far back in pre-historic times. These marked differences, say between a Dane and a Chinaman, tell a long tale of what the children of the same primitive stock have experienced to become what they now are. As the result of this history, man stands at the head of the more highly developed of the two types of life on earth, viz. the animal and plant. He possesses unique powers of retaining recollection of his experiences, in the race-memory.² He has a marvellous gift of reason, increasingly effective and comprehensive in its powers, by which he has acquired partial mastery over space and time, energy and matter,³ and is capable of forming lofty moral and spiritual ideals.

In the story of the kingdom, first one and then another portion of the race has led the van. The battle is ever to the strong and

¹ "The opinion of modern zoologists is against the view of several origins of man" (Tylor, *Anthropology*, p. 5).

² Cp. *Hibbert Journal*, January 1904.

³ "Man conquers Nature by obeying her" (Gwatkin, *The Knowledge of God*, vol. i. p. 90).

disciplined.¹ No section of the kingdom can arrogate to itself a monopoly of precedence for ever. The Western nations have held the lead only in recent times.² It was formerly possessed by Egyptians, Accadians, Chinese, and Indians. For this reason, Christianity is right when it opposes race-prejudice. The dominion given to man in the first chapter of Genesis was a prophecy, not an immediate fulfilment. The story of the kingdom is man's struggle to assert his place in Nature, and to get into fellowship with the Eternal Personality at the basis of Nature.

In various ways does this struggle manifest itself, in language, in arts, war, pleasures, institutions, society, science, and in searchings into the spirit-world—religion. Think of language alone. There are about a thousand distinct languages in the world, although examination shows that these can be classed under a comparatively small number of groups, such as the Aryan. But what ages must have passed before these types were evolved ! The development of the child's speech is a miniature of that of the race. There is the infant's cry,

¹ Cp. An interesting lecture on "Decadence" by A. J. Balfour, delivered at Newnham College, Cambridge.

² Cp. Benjamin Kidd, *Principles of Western Civilization*.

the spasmodic gesture indicating joy or pain, the inarticulate sounds by which the babe seeks to give meaning to its desires, its feelings of pleasure or pain, the beginnings of clearly articulated words, the pitiable poverty of the vocabulary of the child of two or three years of age, the alphabet, the first attempts at writing, the school, the college, the university of life. That, spread over several hundred thousand years, is the story of how this kingdom found its voice. What a kingdom of contrasts throughout its long history ! The crude arithmetic of Babylonia, and the higher plane curves of modern mathematics. The sling and stone from the brook of the lad David, and the newest type of naval gun. The sketch of the mammoth from the cave of La Madeleine, carved on its own ivory, and the Sistine Madonna of the Dresden Gallery. The primitive Briton tracking to his death the British lion (a larger species than that of Asia or Africa at the present day), and the Cambridge professor lecturing on radium. The primitive man's dwelling, a hole dug in the sand underneath some protecting cliff, and the modern billionaire's palace. The flint arrow-head, and the Eiffel Tower. The savage attracting the mother alligator by grating her rough eggs

together, and Dr. Murray's *Dictionary of the English Language*. The cannibals feasting on their dead enemies around the fire on the sea-shore, and the Nobel peace-prize. The screen of palm-leaves of the savage in the Tropics, and the British Houses of Parliament. The garment of bark cut from a tree, and the royal robes of a brilliant European monarch. Producing fire by rubbing two dry sticks together, and the electric arc. The primitive language of gesture, and Marconi's wireless telegraphy. The bow, weapon of war, and also the most elementary of musical instruments—and its lineal descendant, the Bechstein piano. The old chief abandoned, by his own desire, and left to die by the men of his own nomadic tribe, and the sick children's hospital where the ailing babe of the poorest is tended with a mother's care. The reluctant bride carried off in a violent raid, and the gentle wooing of a Romeo. The native Australian liable to be ostracized by his tribesmen if he failed to take vengeance in blood for a relative slain, and Stephen, proto-martyr, saying, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." The savage tribesman who cannot have the right to marry until he has slain a man, and the gentle Jesus, Man of Sorrows, laying down His life on the cross for

guilty sinners. No history affords such contrasts as the history of the kingdom of man, and every line of it has its deep meaning reaching down to the depths of human nature, if only we can read aright. The story of that kingdom has its tragic spots. On the surface, we are tempted to think there has been great and irrecoverable waste. But its law is sacrifice for the greater good,¹ and its movement on the whole has been progressive.² The dignity of man is not being destroyed by the larger view of the kingdom of man, or by the newer religious interpretation of it.

We may not be able to accept the conclusions of Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace as to man being the highest development of a world which is the centre of the Universe. But it is no dis-honour to man that he is any part of the Universe of God, a product of the cosmic

¹ Cp. Benjamin Kidd, *Principles of Western Civilization*.

² "Some races have degenerated through the influence of war, because they lay too much on the track of armies and armed migration; others deteriorated through unfavourable climatic conditions, either because they were crushed into remote corners among untraversable mountains, or into regions unfit to support life on proper conditions, or because a too enervating and luxurious climate sapped the stamina and energy of the people in the course of generations" (*Ramsay, Pauline and other Studies*, p. 6). This certainly applies to certain peoples, but does not contradict the principle of progress for the whole body of men.

process. He has unique gifts to begin with, as compared with the highest of the other animals.¹ Between him and them there is an ever-increasing gulf. The children of the kingdom of man go forth alone. The others cannot follow. Man has broken away from the other creatures on a long journey seeking God, and every step of his advance is intellectual and moral. The tragedy of the kingdom of the lower animals is that they cannot advance as man can. They have not got it in their power to build the bridge across the gulf.² Dr. Taylor has said that "the invention of writing was the great movement by which mankind rose from barbarism to civilization." We have already in the kingdom made two important advances, from savagery to barbarism ; from barbarism to civilization. Is there any one who will say that civilization, as we know it, is the last stage ? Wireless telegraphy and telephony are surely more marvellous than even writing. Air-locomotion will be a commonplace in the business and pleasure world of to-morrow.

¹ Cp. Ray Lankester, *The Kingdom of Man*, p. 7.

² "It is not merely that the highest anthropoid apes have no speech : they have not the brain-organisation enabling them to acquire even its rudiments" (E. B. Tylor, *Anthropology*, p. 54).

Interplanetary communication, from our end at least, is not a problem beyond hope of solution. What revolutionary methods of treating disease and maintaining the efficiency of the human body may not eventually be revealed by the new physics? The phonograph makes a record of the human voice, that is, of the vibration of air produced by the larynx. Is it not possible that some day an instrument may be invented using as its medium, not the coarse air, but the ether, as in wireless telegraphy, and conveying and recording messages, not merely from the brain through the larynx, but directly from the brain itself? Is it not one of the possibilities that even the secret of life will be discovered, and men will be able to utilize life in the same way as they use electricity? In any case, the way of the kingdom of man is a way marked by progress, and, judging from the past, there seems to be no reason to set bounds to man's ultimate rule. In him there is something of the Eternal Personality, and the goal of the kingdom is to know God along the ways which are called holiness, love, and truth. The trees of knowledge and of life are trees whose fruit we are not merely not forbidden, but encouraged, to eat. Each man should grow them in his own garden. The

duty of the religious man in this kingdom is to cherish all that is best and most beautiful in the past, in the marvellous recollection of the kingdom, to point out the best lines of development, and, by missionary efforts at home and abroad, to seek to bring all men up to the level of the Christ-Spirit.

Religion must be combined with the spirit of advance. It continually emphasizes the eternal claims of the human spirit. It reminds man that, in various forms, belief in the survival of human personality has ever haunted men's minds. The man sleeps, but his soul returns again at waking. So the savage reasoned: the man sleeps in death, and his soul does not return to the body, but it must live all the same.¹ The spirits of the men of the kingdom frequent, though unseen, the haunts of the living. Sometimes they go down into the deeps of the earth to another world. Sometimes they pass into the glory of the West-land. Sometimes they come back, and are re-born in children, who, as grown men, will resemble them. Sometimes they creep in beside the fire in the form of some harmless snake. So have men of an earlier, simpler age than ours believed. Modern men, infinitely better

¹ Cp. *The Substance of Faith*, questions xvi., xvii.

equipped, are groping along the lines of telepathy, and the life of the Holy Spirit, towards a firmer grip of the spirit-world. The Christian, while never closing his eyes to any earnest effort or well-ascertained results obtained by others, argues from the fact that God is a Spirit, and that spirit, personality, must be an indestructible thing in man. Sir Oliver Lodge is one of a group of scientists who emphasize the certainty of the survival of human personality and the eternal reality of the spirit-world. Modern religious thought must always emphasize the note of progressive movement in human life. A religion which lives only in the past must inevitably be left behind by the forward movement of the kingdom of man. Modern Christianity, instead of acting as a brake in regard to this progressive movement, ought to be a propelling, and, at the same time, a guiding force, a moral and spiritual dynamic.¹ It can be this under the scheme of doctrine belonging to the Reformed Church. It will refuse to be satisfied with any knowledge previously attained, and,

¹ "The priests of Egypt, who once represented the most advanced knowledge of their time, came to fancy that mankind had no more to learn, and upheld their traditions against all newer wisdom, till the world passed them by and left them grovelling in superstition" (Tylor, *Anthropology*, p. 371).

under the guidance of the Jesus-Spirit, the Spirit of truth, mercy, and holiness, will ever lead the way and invite the citizens of the kingdom of man up to loftier heights of attainment. The enlightened modern interpretation of Christianity proclaims that God, the Eternal Basis of the Universe, has given man a special place in the Universe, and endowed him with the power of unlimited material and spiritual progress. The kingdom of man, to the modern Christian, is an ever-growing mustard-tree, which will one day quite naturally burst forth in every part of it with the amaranthine blossoms of Christ, and in which, somewhere, as we one day will surely know, all the sweetness and the fragrance from the day when the seed was laid in the soil will be preserved. Modern religion emphatically denounces all that would lower the standard of manhood, all that is injurious to the well-being of the kingdom of man, all that would retard its future progress. For this reason it deplores the degradations and depressions of modern industrialism, all immorality, folly, and mental stagnation, everything hurtful to body or spirit, all ignorance of sanitation and of the laws of bodily or mental health, all that, in our inherited scheme of personal ethics, works against

moral freedom, soundness, and virility. It objects to much that is being produced, and to many ways of production, because these are not essential to the progress of the kingdom, and are detrimental to the greater efficiency, and therefore true happiness, of men. It calls upon all to go down and take their part in the service of the kingdom. It bids all work against selfishness and ignorance —the great and perennial national sins. It denounces all artificial barriers which separate, all snobbery and pride, as inhuman. It proclaims that, by patriotism to the kingdom of man, you are serving God and saving your own soul.

II

Not in a spirit of irreverence, not relying on an ignorant dogmatism, not servilely bowing down to the god which men worship as orthodoxy,¹ unless that orthodoxy can be shown to be “orthe” in reality as well as in appearance, ought we to approach the study of such a great

¹ “Orthodoxy is always the doctrine officially consecrated by success” (Sabatier, *The Religions of Authority and the Religion of the Spirit*, p. 29). When Dr. Forsyth (*Hilbert Journal*, October 1905, “Authority and Theology”) says that “orthodoxy is foreign to the genius of Protestantism,” he can only mean that orthodoxy which is alien to the spirit of progressive and enlightened Protestantism.

subject as the Incarnation.¹ The one God whom we worship is the God of truth. No one is worthy of the name of theologian except he be prepared, at the sacrifice of any ecclesiastical creed, to recognize the eternal truth, dimly seen at best, it may be, from afar, yet, once truly seen, for ever loved beyond all that earth and time can give. There is no merit in obscurity or obscurantism. Neither antiquity nor ecclesiastical authority will make any statement true unless it be true in its own merit. There is no credit in obscuring the facts. Light discovered by new research must be allowed, even though its brilliancy may reveal flaws in what was hitherto supposed to be faultless. The testimony of the modern scientific spirit bears out the witness of Christ in the days of His flesh—there can be no greater condemnation than that light is come into the world, and that men nevertheless choose darkness rather than the light. In theology, as in physical science, it is imperative that the facts should be allowed to speak for themselves. But let us not mistake pious imaginations for facts.

¹ Christ's Divinity "has been the dynamic force in Christian preaching throughout the ages" (D. W. Forrest, *The Authority of Christ*, p. 41).

Approaching the study even of the Incarnation in this reverent, truth-loving spirit, whatever the result may be, we do not need to be afraid of it. Whatever may have to go will eventually be found not to be valuable.¹ The issue will certainly not be the impoverishment of our religious life and experience, rather their deepening, widening, and spiritualization. The riches of God's nature, from whatever point of view we may consider Him, are inexhaustible. His delight, we believe, is to reveal Himself increasingly to His children. The more we know Him as Father the better are we likely to realize our sonship. Let us admit at once that the realization must ever be in the Christ Spirit and along the Christ way.

Progress is essential, not only in the religious life of the individual, but in the content of religious knowledge itself. Doctrine, as the expression of religious truth realized in experience, must also be capable of growth. Progress never means the abolition of what is of permanent value. The Gospel did not destroy the Mosaic Law, it absorbed it in the larger

¹ "The new truth discovered by free inquiry is older and more venerable than the most venerable authority" (Sabatier, *The Religions of Authority and the Religion of the Spirit*, p. xxxiv.).

Law of Love. The worst things that can happen to a Church are to become doctrinally stagnant, or to give people any cause to believe that the ground on which they stand doctrinally is no longer secure. Doctrine is the child of reason and religious experience.¹ “The ultimate arbiter in religious truth is not subjective notions and impressions . . . but it is the objective authority of reason itself.”² The human reason, with every fresh advance in scientific knowledge, extends its domain and comes to fuller realization of itself. We have already noted that the religious experience of mankind, from the very nature of God, must be an expanding experience. Therefore must doctrine, the offspring of these two expanding forces, be a growing, a progressive thing.

Religion is essential to human life.³ Even though it may change in form, it, in itself, is an abiding entity. Christians of an extremely

¹ Mommsen says, “Theology is the spurious offspring of reason and faith” (*History of Rome*, Book III. p. 111). But this can only be said of a theology framed out of a false faith by a wrong use of reason.

² Principal Caird, *Philosophy of Religion*, p. 61.

³ “Even one who is of opinion that the times of religion have gone by . . . will still feel the necessity of finding equivalents for the loss of belief in those goods which the vanishing of religion entails” (Höffding, *The Problems of Philosophy*, p. 178).

broad-minded type believe that what is essential in Christianity will ever survive.¹ The Theistic conception of the Universe, exhibited in its best form in the doctrine of the Reformed Church, represents the survival of the fittest among all the views, Naturalistic, Animistic, Polytheistic, Pantheistic, Deistic, Agnostic, and Atheistic, which in various forms have been propounded. The dogma of Theism will abide, and, inspired by it, there can be no limit set to the possibilities of scientific progress. Christianity, stripped of all unnecessary superstition, is the rational religion, the religion which is in harmony with that scientific spirit which must ever be the spirit of a progressive humanity. Christian theologians need not be afraid, therefore, to study such a sacred subject as the Incarnation itself in the light of reason, and in accordance with the methods of science, or inspired, as we might say, by the free and truth-loving mind of the Reformed Church.

¹ "What is certain is that Christianity will not disappear, whatever progress may be made in science, art, and literary culture. . . . Christianity will be still there as what they rest against and imply" (Matthew Arnold, *Last Essays on Church and Religion*, p. xxiv.). In the State schools of France they have a system of teaching what is called *La Morale*. This is meant to be a substitute for religious teaching. But from the study of the programme of the system, it is at once seen that the system implies a religious background or basis.

The doctrine of the Incarnation presupposes the truth of Theism, and is necessary to a satisfactory explanation of God's ethical character, and to a worthy view of man as having been made in the image of God. There could be no doctrine of the Incarnation under Deism, with its God dwelling afar off and careless of His creation, under Pantheism with its iron law of necessity,¹ or under any of the purely materialistic theories of the Universe. It is postulated that there should be a worthy conception of the nature of God as being not merely a cosmic power, not merely a callous, calculating organiser of the world's order and physical progress, not merely a ruthless and unfeeling providence, but in some sense (even if, as of necessity must be the case, in a more or less transcendental sense), our Father. The old Genesis vision of man as made in the image of God must be, in at least some measure, true, otherwise the Incarnation would be not merely impossible but in vain.² The Incarnation would have been thrown away on a race of Yahoos.³ It is presupposed that God is not

¹ Cp. Flint, *Anti-Theistic Theories*, p. 334 f.

² " [This religion] must claim man as akin to God in a relationship which can never be broken, and is eternal" (S. A. Brooke, *Religion in Literature*, p. 55).

³ Cp. *Gulliver's Travels*.

merely able and desirous to stoop down, but that man has an inherent capability, given by that same God, of rising up responsive to Him. Salvation, which was the purpose of the Incarnation, is, in other words, not for the stocks and stones, even though God can raise up children from these to Abraham, but for men, who in some sense at least were potential children, and who were able, when once they were freed from sin, to tread the Christ way leading to that fellowship and communion with the Father which Christ always shared in the days of His flesh.

It is presupposed that God's interest in us, at all times, has been moral and redemptive, that He has always loved us, and, knowing the kinship between us and Himself, desired to point out to us our latent powers of spiritual elevation and progress. "Our hearts are restless, till they find rest in Thee."¹ Without a belief, alike in God's desire to redeem and in man's inherent redeemability, neither the purpose of the Incarnation nor its practical utility would be comprehensible to the human reason.

And now, at this point, it is perhaps just as well to indicate certain important distinctions

¹ Cp. Augustine, *Confessions*, Book I. chap. i. (Pilkington's Translation).

which should always be clearly kept in view. Consider the terms, Incarnation, sinlessness, lordship of Christ, pre-existence, Virgin-birth, eternal Sonship.¹ It is highly important to recognize at the first that, while each one of these may so far imply the others, not one is quite identical with any other. By Incarnation we mean literally the condition of living in the flesh. Primarily the term might refer to any kind of flesh. But specifically the name means "the condition of God or the Divine being in human flesh." Incarnation is different from Immanence. Immanence means "the condition of God or the Divine dwelling in, or embodied in (it may be manifestly or not) different forms and phenomena of the world and nature." It is, therefore, more a philosophical than a religious term, which latter Incarnation is. Immanence tends to Pantheism, Incarnation to Theism.

Both ideas are implied in other faiths² as

¹ Many Anglican writers on the Incarnation persistently fail to distinguish between these terms.

² "The early Babylonian kings, from the time of Sargon I. till the fourth dynasty of Ur or later, claimed to be gods in their life-time" (J. G. Frazer, *Lectures on the Early History of the Kingship*, p. 147; also Lecture VI. on the practice of marrying a god to a mortal woman. In the Makalaka hills to the west of Matabeleland there lives a human god. This man-god "resides in the depth of a cave, in the midst

well as in Christianity ; but in the pagan religions there is more of the element of Immanence than the idea of Incarnation, which in a uniquely pure form is found in Christianity alone. This follows as a natural corollary from the specific Christian conception of the Divine Fatherhood. From a comparative study of the various examples of pagan incarnation, the Christian theologian has the right to claim for Christ the distinction of being the Incarnate.¹ On a threefold ground this claim is justified : (1) because of the sublime nature of God incarnate in Christ ; (2) because of His lofty redemptive purpose in becoming incarnate ; (3) because of the unique of a labyrinth." From the deep gulf where he dwells there issue periodically noises like thunder. The poor, ignorant natives lay offerings of "flesh and wheat, fowls, cakes, and other presents" on the edge of the abyss. J. G. Frazer, *Ibid.*, pp. 135-7.

¹ "The pre-Christian religions were the age-long prayer. The Incarnation was the answer" (J. R. Illingworth, *Lux Mundi*, p. 205). In the ancient Egyptian religion, as in the Japanese, mankind is conceived of as not sprung from the earth, but directly from the body of the god Khepera, or Neber-tcher, and the mighty conqueror Piankhi is made to say, "I was formed in the womb, and was made to come into being from a divine egg, and the God set his seed in me, and placed his Ka (with me)" ; but this conception of Incarnation is at once seen to be altogether different from that of Jesus Christ, who was conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost. E. A. Wallis Budge, *Legends of the Gods*, p. xxi ; *Annals of the Nubian Kings*, p. 30.

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fulness of the union between the Divine and
human manifested in Christ.

The sinlessness of Jesus is one of the grounds of our belief in His Incarnation. Or, we might say, His sinlessness was the outcome or concomitant of His Incarnate Nature. Incarnation is, however, a condition of being. Sinlessness is an aspect of moral character. Christ's Incarnation and His sinlessness probably stand or fall together; but they can and ought to be distinguished. The same applies to His lordship, *i.e.* to His sovereign claim to Divine Powers and rights in connection with the human soul. If we think of Christ in any sense as God Incarnate in human flesh, we would naturally expect Him to have certain unique powers and claims, constituting a form of lordship; but what these are should be determined, as far as it is possible to do so, not in an *a priori* way, but from recorded facts of Christ's character and words. If, on other grounds, we are convinced of the truth of Christ's Incarnation, we may logically infer His lordship in some form, or, from ascertained facts and authenticated claims of Christ, we may be led back to further confirmation of His Incarnation; but the two things ought to

be kept distinct in such a way as to avoid confusion. Then again, Christ's pre-existence, meaning thereby that God, in the second Person of the Trinity, existed consciously and as a distinct Person before the Immaculate Conception, is manifestly quite distinguishable from the condition of that Second Person entering into human flesh. The Incarnation may be held to presuppose the pre-existence of the Second Person of the Trinity ; but the two things ought to be clearly conceived apart. As a matter of fact, the disciples were convinced, by personal contact, of Christ's Divinity, before they had risen at all to the conception of His pre-existence.

Then, as to the Virgin-birth, the necessity of distinction here is even greater. In ordinary life, you may have a perfectly accurate knowledge of a man's ability and character, without knowing where and of what parents he was born. William Shakespeare *is* William Shakespeare, George Washington *is* George Washington, whatever their parents, or the circumstances of their birth were. The Virgin-birth may be true or not true, and the matter is one which ought to be decided on grounds of evidence, and by its own merits ; but if, for convincing reasons, I am certain that Christ

was divine, that Christ was God Incarnate in human flesh, I may decide for or against the Virgin-birth, or leave it an open question. The matter is one to be determined calmly and rationally by judging of the evidence for or against. The test of a man being a Christian is that he accepts Christ as divine, and permits this divine element to penetrate and rule his life. Some writers so confuse the Virgin-birth with the doctrine of the Incarnation that they practically say, "Deny the one, and the other goes." But these men are surely those who are prepared to let the kernel, which they might in any case keep, go, to save the husk.¹ The natural inference from Scripture evidence is that Christ's disciples accepted His Divinity, that He was somehow or other God Incarnate in their midst, before they attempted to explain how that came about, the nature of His birth. Later on, I shall give the evidence for and against the orthodox doctrine of the Virgin-birth. Then one can decide for oneself whether this is to be rejected or retained; but, in the meantime, let us clearly

¹ "There can be, for Catholic Christians, no question as to the fundamental facts of Christology. These facts comprise the essential divinity of our Lord, Jesus Christ; His perfect and entire manhood, born of Mary, the Virgin" (F. Weston, *The One Christ*, p. 23).

distinguish between these two, the Incarnation and the Virgin-birth.

Then the Eternal Sonship is the largest term of all, implying the divine personal existence of Christ, before His birth at Bethlehem, from all eternity. His human life in the days of His flesh, and His continued existence in the fullness of Deity. There is, of course, a general sense in which we understand pre-existence as exemplified in Wordsworth's *Ode on Intimation of Immortality*. But in Christ the term is more specific, more definite, more personal, and more comprehensive. With Jesus it was not a mystical recollection, but a clear consciousness of continued divine life. His death and resurrection were the means employed by which His Spirit, which had been as it were chained for a time to earth, was released, that it might resume its unfettered existence. His essential Divinity presupposed His pre-existence, and implied His post-mundane life. But let us note that, while we grant all this, we have not yet said that the Virgin-birth was necessary.

In a general sense, all spirit in flesh is incarnation. I can remember with what vivid conviction the late Professor Sabatier brought this home to the minds of his students, and

made us realize how truly we ourselves are incarnate. The thinking ego, the mind which knows and is conscious of itself as something different from, something superior to the matter of brain through which it works—that is an example of the incarnate life. Yet the Church has been right in always making a vivid distinction between the Incarnation in Christ and the more general examples of incarnation in ordinary men and women. And here it is perhaps noteworthy that, for these ordinary examples of incarnation, the Virgin-birth is not merely not necessary, but would be felt to be monstrous.

Now let us pass to the consideration of the method in which the Incarnation was effected. Three ways have been suggested : (1) the Virgin-birth in accordance with Catholic tradition from a very early (though not perhaps from the earliest times) ; (2) the natural fatherhood of Joseph (as the first sixteen verses of the Gospel according to St. Matthew imply) and the motherhood of Mary ; but at the same time the special entrance of the Pneuma, or Spirit of God, at the moment of conception ; and (3) the natural fatherhood of Joseph and motherhood of Mary, the ordinary boyhood and young manhood of Jesus, and the Incarnation be-

ginning with the descent of the Holy Spirit at Christ's baptism.¹

Now it is important to observe that you may hold any of these three views and yet be a genuine Christian believer in Christ's Incarnation and Divinity. All three imply that God became man ; but they indicate quite different ways in which this was accomplished. Which of the three is the true view ? Let us begin with the first, the Virgin-birth. Now I desire to state at once that I dissociate myself entirely from the methods of Dr. Randolph and G. H. Box, and certain other apologists of the Anglican Church,² which are unscientific.

Dr. Randolph gives the following four arguments in favour of the Virgin-birth : (1) evidence for it in the second century ; (2) evidence in the references to Christ's origin and birth at the commencement of St. Matthew's and St. Luke's Gospels ; (3) the argument *e silentio* ; (4) evidence from the theological aspect. The method is illegitimate from the

¹ "Du reste le quatrième évangile, comme le second, est muet sur le passé et si nous n'avions à tenir compte que de son récit, nous serions autorisés à penser que l'Incarnation à coïncidé avec la descente du Saint-Esprit sur l'homme Jésus, descente vue et racontée par son précurseur" (A. Réville, *Jésus de Nazareth*, vol. i. p. 336).

² Cp. Dr. Randolph, *The Virgin-birth of Our Lord* ; G. H. Box, *The Virgin-birth of Jesus*.

very sequence of its professed proof. You cannot prove a house to have a certain kind of foundation by describing the walls three or four feet above the ground. The Patristic quotations are not a first-rate authority, for they are all based on the notices at the beginning of St. Matthew and St. Luke, and even these are not our earliest relevant witnesses.¹ It is difficult to see how the argument from silence is any argument at all, because, even though the Resurrection were the chief theme of the apostolic preaching, if the Apostles knew of the Virgin-birth, would they not have made use of what was surely an important, even a marvellous fact? Would it not have been natural for them to employ this as the supplement to their Resurrection teaching? This method is not scientific, and we leave it.

Probably, at this point, it may be as well to state and deal with the objections commonly raised against the Virgin-birth. Of the objectors there are two main classes: (1) those who absolutely deny the possibility of such a

¹ "Les deux plus anciens documents écrits, les *Logia* de Matthieu qui résumaient l'enseignement du Maître, et le *Prôto-Marc*, qui joignait une histoire anecdotique à l'élément doctrinal, ne s'étendaient pas sur la période antérieure, le premier par définition, le second par une sorte de parti pris" (A. Réville, *Jésus de Nazareth*, vol. i. p. 335).

miraculous occurrence ; (2) those who do not deny the miraculous in general, but who find no sure evidence, but rather the contrary, in their critical study of the New Testament narratives, for the Virgin-birth—those, in short, who believe that there is no Scriptural justification for the formulation of the doctrine. The former reject the doctrine mainly on physiological grounds. To do so with absolute certainty is impossible, in our present imperfect knowledge of the nature of life and matter, and the origin of matter.¹ It is, in any case, with the second class that we have mainly to deal. If a man denies point-blank the possibility of special Divine interference, then he needs no further Scriptural arguments to convince him, nor will anything advanced in favour of the doctrine influence him, so long as he is determined to hold his main position.

The chief objections raised against the Virgin-birth are: (1) The doctrine of the Virgin-birth implies a false and Manichæan view of human nature. (2) It forgets that ordinary generation originates from God, not from sin. It is part of God's great and marvellous scheme of Nature. (3) The highest type of

¹ Cp. the experiments of Professor J. J. Thomson and Sir Oliver Lodge.

Christian mind realizes that the Incarnation is essentially spiritual. (4) It is quite possible to conceive of Christ as divine without any doctrine of the Virgin-birth. (5) The Holy Spirit is a feminine word in Hebrew.¹ (6) The Virgin-birth does not get rid, in any case, of the hereditary taint.² (7) In the St. Matthew and St. Luke narratives Christ is described as a descendant of David through Joseph. For, otherwise, what would be the use of giving all that list from David, if Jesus were not David's son?³ (8) The question, "Wist ye not that I must be in My Father's House?"⁴ which His parents did not understand, implies that His miraculous birth was not believed in at the time. (9) The attitude of Jesus' mother

¹ Cp. A. Réville, *Histoire du dogme de la divinité de Jésus Christ*, vol. i. 358 f. The Gospel of the Hebrews, where Jesus is made to say, "My mother the Holy Spirit."

² "And our very Saviour Himself also, Thine Only-begotten, I believed to have been reached forth, as it were for our salvation, out of the lump of Thy most-efulgent mass, so as to believe nothing of Him but what I was able to imagine in my vanity. Such a nature, then, I thought could not be born of the Virgin Mary without being mingled with the flesh; and how that which I had thus figured to myself could be mingled without being contaminated I said not" (Augustine, *Confessions*, V. x., where he is speaking of his Manichæan error).

³ St. Luke iii. 23, where He is "supposed" to be the son of Joseph.

⁴ St. Luke ii. 49, R.V.

and brethren to Him in His public ministry : “ He is beside Himself,” they said. (10) Paul affirms the birth of Jesus in the ordinary way of Joseph—seed of “ David ”¹ and the Spirit. (11) The Johannine literature does not embody the tradition of the Virgin-birth. In dealing with the evidence for and against the doctrine of the Virgin-birth, it is important to take the Scripture evidences as far as possible in their chronological order, *i.e.* (1) Paul’s Epistles² ; (2) the two original documents at the basis of the Synoptics ; (3) the birth-narratives in St. Matthew and St. Luke ; (4) Acts, St. John, etc. We should take into careful consideration in the following sequence of value : (1) Christ’s self-testimony ; (2) Mary’s testimony and that of other members of the family of Jesus ; (3) the witness of the disciples ; (4) general tradition.

Beginning with the Pauline evidence,³ Paul makes very little reference to Christ’s birth,

¹ Rom. i. 3.

² “ The apostle Paul, in his Epistles, omits or ignores the entire life of the Master, His miraculous birth, His miracles, His teaching, and connects His Gospel with a single fact, the death of Christ upon the cross ” (Sabatier, *The Religions of Authority and the Religion of the Spirit*, p. 272).

³ Cp. Jülicher, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, for the chronological order of the Pauline Epistles.

a fact which is somewhat difficult to explain, if he had believed in the miraculous view of it, set forth in the narratives of St. Matthew's and St. Luke's Gospel. There is nothing in St. Paul's writings which directly implies the Virgin-birth. Jesus is the "seed of Abraham," "made of a woman," "made under the law," "made sin for us," "in the likeness of sinful flesh," "of whom (the Israelites), as concerning the flesh, Christ came." Now this would seem at once to lead us to the conclusion that Paul's evidence is altogether hostile to the doctrine of the Virgin-birth. But that is not so. To begin with, he does not explicitly deny it. Then we must remember that Paul (Christian as he had become), was nevertheless a Jew born, and, by that persistent Jewish prejudice which characterizes the race, even though they may change their faith, he would naturally emphasize in Christ the Abrahamic descent.¹ Moreover, to Paul, the essential interest in Christ was religious rather than ontological. He was the Christ who met him on the Damascus way and changed the current of his life, the Christ through whom he had entered into mysterious fellowship with God, in the life of the Spirit. Paul's evidence is at best neutral.

¹ Cp. A. Deissmann, *St. Paul*, p. 98.

It is scientific to say that, if it is not a proof of the Virgin-birth, it is certainly not conclusive evidence against.

Then, as regards the two original sources of the oldest parts of the Synoptic Gospels, they do not, as far as we can make out, have much to do with the earlier part of Christ's life. For them the existence of the Incarnate Son, it is maintained, begins with the descent of the Holy Spirit at Christ's baptism.¹ This view, however, requires qualification, because both questions are asked, “Is not this the carpenter's son ?” and, “Is not His mother called Mary ?”² These are surely direct references to His birth, if they mean anything. Now, while there is no direct proof here of the belief in the Virgin-birth, it is certainly remarkable that, while He is only once in St. Luke³ described as “Joseph's son,” and only once in St. Matthew as “the carpenter's son,” He is in St. Mark, St. Matthew,⁴ and St. Luke spoken

¹ “Auparavant il était simplement ‘Jésus le charpentier.’ ” A. Réville, *Jésus de Nazareth*, vol. i. p. 335.

² St. Matt. xiii. 55 f. The following Gospel passages should be carefully studied in regard to the divinity and humanity of Christ's birth: St. Matt. v. 44 f., vi. 32, vii. 9–11, xiii. 55, xiv. 33, xxi. 37, xxvii. 43; St. Mark, iii. 11, 32, vi. 3; St. Luke iv. 22, viii. 21, x. 22, xii. 32.

³ St. Luke iv. 22.

⁴ St. Matt. xiii. 55.

of as Mary's son,¹ without any reference to Joseph. One possible explanation of this latter is certainly given by the belief in the Virgin-birth. He is Mary's son, and, through her, brother to the other members of the family, children of Joseph, and yet in His case there is no mention, in the reference of St. Mark at least, to the natural fatherhood of Joseph.

As regards His relationship to God, Jesus uses the term Father (1) in a limited specific sense; (2) in a conjoint sense; (3) as applied to others. God is "Father," or "My Father," or "our Father," or "your Father." "All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father; and no one knoweth who the Son is, save the Father; and who the Father is, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him."² In the Lord's Prayer He begins, "Our Father, which art in heaven," and He speaks in St. Matthew's Gospel of "your Father in heaven." In all these cases it is difficult to decide whether Jesus is not speaking in a purely religious sense. The same remark applies to the accusation made against Jesus by His enemies when

¹ Cp. "His mother," St. Mark iii. 31; St. Matt. xiii. 46-7; St. Luke viii. 19 f.

² St. Luke x. 22.

they said that He made the claim, “I am the Son of God.”¹ His enemies were likely to misinterpret what Christ said, as enemies usually do. In the Old Testament men were accustomed to speak of God as “our Father”; for example, “But now, O Lord, Thou art our Father.”² This Old Testament use of the expression, however, is quite as much hereditary³ as religious. Jesus gave the expression a distinctly religious emphasis which it never had before. Altogether, what is the evidence from the two oldest sources of the Synoptics, so far as we can tell? It is (1) the clear use of the expression “Father,” applied to God, in a distinctive religious sense; (2) while in a general sort of way the question is asked, “Is not this Joseph’s son?”⁴ we must remember this was not asked by any one who was a first-rate authority, but by an ordinary synagogue congregation. It was the

¹ St. Matt. xxvii. 43.

² Isa. lxiv. 8. Wendt (*System der Christlichen Lehre*) points out that Jesus took the Old Testament Fatherhood of God for granted, but shows that never previously was there given to the knowledge of the ethical character of God as love such a decisive significance for the entire pious view of the relationship between man and God as was given through Jesus.

³ Cp. the divine descent from old-world deities in the Japanese mythology of the Nihongi and Kojiki.

⁴ St. Luke iv. 22.

natural thing, then as now, in the case of a remarkable young preacher, to locate him by naming his father. Moreover, while this question expressly mentioning Joseph is thus reported only once,¹ the other question, “Is not His mother called Mary ?”² is given alike by St. Matthew and St. Mark. This seems to prove beyond doubt that this latter was in both the primitive sources, whereas it may be doubted whether the former belonged to an original source at all. It evidently did not occur in both the original sources. The very fact that Jesus stands out more prominently as Mary’s son than as Joseph’s seems to weigh in favour of the belief in the Virgin-birth.

Now, coming to the birth-narratives at the beginning of the Gospels according to St. Matthew and St. Luke, it is better to admit at once that there is no evidence for the Davidic descent of Mary.³ Undoubtedly the object of St. Matthew i. 1-17 is to prove the Davidic descent of Jesus through Joseph.

¹ “Is not this the carpenter’s son ?” is the same question as is asked in St. Luke. It is a very remarkable fact that in St. Mark vi. 3, the question is “Is not this the carpenter ?”

² St. Matthew xiii. 55 ; St. Mark vi. 3 : “Is not this the Son of Mary ?”

³ St. Luke i. 27 would seem expressly to exclude the possibility of thinking that Mary was of Davidic descent. *Encyc. Bibl.*, Art. “Mary.”

The writer evidently felt that he could not prove the Davidic descent through Mary. His object in giving this genealogy was not to deny the Virgin-birth, but to show through the David-Joseph descent that the Old Testament (Messianic) conception had been fulfilled.¹ But how is he to reconcile this with the Virgin-birth which he proceeds to enunciate? The bridge is to be found in verse 16: "and Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ." Mark that here Joseph is just the husband of Mary. It is of Mary that Jesus is born. The first seventeen verses of St. Matthew's first chapter, in fact, cannot be reconciled with what follows. One of the two must go, and I prefer to surrender the Davidic descent through Joseph. But is all difficulty thus removed? No, for consider verse 23: "Behold, a virgin shall be with child,

¹ St. Matthew xxii. 42. Jesus asks the Pharisees, "What think ye of the Christ? Whose Son is He? They say unto him, The Son of David."

Undoubtedly the object of St. Matthew i. 1-17 is to prove the Davidic descent of Jesus through Joseph. It is "the book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David." There would be absolutely no sense in giving this list if the writer did not believe in the Davidic descent, unless he meant this: "Granted that the Davidic descent of Christ is right, then the only way in which it could occur was through Joseph, understood to be the natural father." St. Matthew ix. 27, xii. 23, xv, 22; St. Mark xi. 10.

and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel.” Undoubtedly the word in the original Hebrew, here translated “virgin,” did not necessarily mean a “virgin,” but might rather be, as Karl Marti has pointed out, “a married woman, or an as yet unmarried daughter.”¹ But, in any case, from two points of view the objection does not invalidate the central fact of this part of the narrative, the Virgin-birth. For we might reply that, if the Virgin-birth was a fact, it did not thereby cease to be a fact because the writer of the narrative sought to show that it fulfilled a misstatement of prophecy. And again, we must remember that even if **בָתִילָה** is not necessarily a virgin, the LXX. rendering *παρθένος*² is a “virgin,” and why should not this Virgin-birth be a fulfilment of what was surely a further and purer development of the idea as set forth in the later LXX. rendering? The

¹ “Denn **בָתִילָה** hat durchaus nicht den Sinn von **בָתִילָה** sondern von einer erwachsenen . . . die **בָתִילָה** kann ein verheiratete Frau oder eine noch unverheiratete Tochter sein.” Cp. Jesaja (*Hand-commentar*), p. 76. Clemen says that **בָתִילָה** refers to a definite young woman who has not yet borne a child” (*Primitive Christianity and its Non-Jewish Sources*, p. 144).

² *ἰδού* ἡ *παρθένος* ἐν γαστρὶ λήμψεται καὶ τέξεται νιόν. LXX., Swete’s edition.

point is that the people had come to accept the LXX. version of the woman who was to conceive, and the writer, in describing the miracle of the Virgin-birth, at once seized on this. One could illustrate the point from Christ's own words. The writer is undoubtedly hampered, throughout his narrative, by the desire to prove the Davidic descent of the virgin's Son through Joseph (the only way evidently open to him), and at the same time to prove the two irreconcilable things—the Virgin-birth and the Davidic descent through Joseph, by reference to the Old Testament prophecy. The latter is further illustrated by the reference to Jesus as "king of the Jews."¹ The strong point in favour of the Virgin-birth is that, while the Davidic descent of the Messiah was an established tradition held, as we see from the Gospels themselves, alike by the religious leaders and the common people, there is no evidence that the Virgin-birth was so held previous to Christ's birth, and yet who dare deny that, if any part of the narrative is to stand, it is that which affirms the Virgin-birth ?

Then, as to St. Luke's account, however we may doubt the angel-greetings, and, as many

¹ St. Matthew ii. 2.

think, somewhat artificial outbursts of song, the central fact remains, as in St. Matthew's account, that this Mary by her own reported testimony is, while in the virgin-state, found of child by the Holy Spirit.¹ Here, again, it is Joseph that is of the lineage of David; but there is not the same futile effort made, which we find in St. Matthew, to reconcile a Davidic descent through Joseph with the Virgin-birth. There is a slight suggestion of it, "and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David,"² and in the words "because he [Joseph] was of the house and lineage of David."³ The shepherds, coming, find "Mary and Joseph and the Babe lying in a manger." Departing, the shepherds carry with them a "saying" which causes amazement to all who hear it. What could this saying be, if it were not the story of the Virgin-birth? Mary, on the other hand, is reticent, and keeps her personal knowledge of the miracle to herself. Why? That is a difficult question to answer. The facts immediately narrated after this are in no way extraordinary or miraculous. They are sim-

¹ St. Luke i. 34, 35. ² St. Luke i. 32. ³ St. Luke ii. 4.

ply an application of the so-called law of Moses to Mary's case. In the story of Simeon and Jesus, Joseph is evidently regarded as one of the parents.¹ Immediately after, in the same story, the same tradition appears: "and His father and His mother were marvelling at the things which were spoken concerning Him."² Why should Mary have marvelled, having the knowledge of the Virgin-birth in her heart? Yet later still in the story, it is Mary, His mother, alone that Simeon addresses.³ In the Anna story, in verse 40 f., appears the merely human explanation, "His parents." But again in verse 43, "Joseph and His mother,"⁴ and more difficult still in verse 48, Mary expressly calls Joseph "Thy father," and Jesus answers by speaking of "My Father's house," meaning not Joseph, but God. It probably simplifies this latter if we understand Jesus to be speaking in a purely religious sense. Altogether it is obvious that these two narratives bristle with difficulties. Perhaps it simplifies matters somewhat if we

¹ "And when the parents brought in the child Jesus" (St. Luke ii. 27).

² St. Luke ii. 33.

³ St. Luke ii. 34.

⁴ In support of this reading there are ACX, Γ, Δ, Λ, Π, *unc.*⁸, *al*, *pler*, *b*, *c*, *f*, *f*,² *g*,¹ *l*, *q*, *go*, *syr^{sch}*, *et ptxt ceth*.

recognize that there are two traditions embodied in them: (1) the actual fatherhood of Joseph and the consequent Davidic descent of Christ; (2) the Virgin-birth and the rejection of the Davidic descent. The natural fatherhood of Joseph is a tradition, the origin of which is easy to explain; it is much more difficult to explain away this strong tradition of the miraculous Virgin-birth.

In the Acts we hear of "Mary the mother of Jesus"; but the absence of reference to Joseph would in any case be natural—he being already dead. Peter, in his speech,¹ when describing the human life of Christ, begins, not with the birth, but with His baptism. There is nothing here about the Virgin-birth, yet the lordship of Christ is affirmed. Christ is "Jesus of Nazareth,"² not Jesus born at Bethlehem. He is "a man approved of God," but this does not necessarily affirm the human fatherhood of Joseph. Yet the Joseph fatherhood seems to be implied in the saying that "of the fruit of his [David's] loins"³ Christ would come. Jesus is "His [God's] Son,"⁴ but probably the sense is religious, or at least

¹ Acts i. 15 f.

² Acts ii. 22.

³ Acts ii. 30.

⁴ Acts iii. 13. The translation may also be "His servant Jesus."

indefinite. In the Acts, on the whole, the general position is neither positive affirmation nor explicit denial of the Virgin-birth, but the standard attitude of His disciples, when they lived with Him in the days of His flesh—they felt assured of His Divinity, yet had not come to a quite clear idea of the manner of His Incarnation.¹ To the writer of the Gospel according to St. John the question of the Virgin-birth does not arise. Christ is the Eternal Logos, who lived a personal life with God, the Father, from all eternity, and dwelt with men for a season; but it is left undescribed how this Divine Logos entered into human flesh.

Altogether we must allow that in the tradition, as a whole, there is obscurity in some parts which is hard to account for, and inconsistency in others; yet the fact remains,

¹ 1 Peter i. 11, speaks of the Spirit of Christ which “testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ.” This does not in any way affirm the Virgin-birth. Professor Macintosh (*The Person of Christ*, p. 46) thinks that this at least implies the pre-existence of Christ, and argues that “only that can be manifested which was in being before manifestation.” But is there not a fallacy implied in this argument, if he means the pre-existence of the Personal Christ? Is not all that we can deduce from Peter’s statement his belief that the Spirit of God did certainly exist before His specific manifestation in the historic Jesus? It does not at all follow, in other words, that the distinctive personality of Christ did pre-exist.

without Jesus Himself affirming it, that the tradition of the Virgin-birth is unmistakably and confidently set forth. It might be shown that in the Scriptural description of the Virgin-birth there are features which separate it from all others in the heathen mythologies. And the hardest problem of all is just to explain away the miraculous origin of Christ through the Virgin-birth. It is comparatively easy to explain the elements in the narrative which disagree with it; but because of the firm place which the Virgin-birth holds in these narratives, on purely scientific grounds, it is hard, if not impossible, to explain it away. Personally we cannot see how we are to reject the validity of the doctrine of the Virgin-birth; but, at the same time, if there are those who cannot accept it, but who are nevertheless convinced of Christ's Divinity, and through Him have actually entered into the life of fellowship, the life of the Spirit, these we would frankly recognize as genuine followers of Christ.

The Divinity of Christ is implied in His sinless character, and in the unique revelation which He gives of God as the Father. We accept His lordship as an article of faith, although we do not find some of the arguments

in favour of it convincing.¹ In whatever sense we admit that lordship, it is to be explained in keeping with His Incarnate, Divine life. His sinlessness was the natural result of the absolute conformity of His whole life and character to the Divine Will—the Father's will being also consciously His own will. One of the grave difficulties in the way of accepting the view that the Incarnation dates from the descent of the Holy Ghost at His baptism is that this would imply that, in the previous years of His life, there had been the ordinary process of moral evolution, battling with temptation, and, sometimes at least, falling into sin. It seems impossible to see how the sinlessness of Christ can be upheld unless we postulate a true Incarnation, at least from the first beginnings of conscious activity.²

In Christ there was a unique Incarnation. The full scope and meaning of that we probably can never estimate; but it was an Incarnation with a religious, a redemptive purpose. Christ is the Elder Son, different from the younger sons, yet seeking to make us in

¹ E.g. those advanced by Dr. Forrest, *The Authority of Christ*.

² "The childhood of the second Adam is spent, as if in Paradise, in the midst of the sinful history" (Martensen, *Christian Dogmatics*, p. 280).

His Spirit like Himself, seeking to bring us to the conscious life of fellowship with the Father—a fellowship which can be ours only through Christ, the Elder Brother. Jesus, the Elder Son, was unlike that man of the parable who refused to go in even though his father entreated him : Jesus left the field and went into the far country to bring the younger brothers back. Jesus is one of many brethren, but we must give to Him the honour. He is the Son : we are only “ sons ” through Him.

The Incarnation becomes to us a practical reality only when, imbued with the Spirit of Christ, we realize the Divine life. I cannot see why the older view of the Incarnation should not be united to the new. To enlightened Christians of the Reformed Church, the Christ of Galilee was the Infinite Spirit of God dwelling in the finite body of a mortal man. To us there is no such great miracle in this as one might at first suppose. The human mind can conceive immensities of space and time, and yet dwells for some years in a brain weighing a few ounces. There should be no difficulty in reconciling the old-fashioned view of the Infinite God present in mortal flesh with the newer view of Sabatier, Hermann,¹ and others,

¹ Cp. Herrmann, *Verkehr der Christen mit Gott*.

that the purpose of that Incarnate life was to enable men to experience the religion of the Spirit. The two things are part of one whole. The Divine Christ is also my Redeemer and Guide. Where servants, however faithful, had failed, or had but a sorry success, the Son had to come to succeed. Where a God would have failed, or a mere man (be he prophet, priest, or king), the God-man prevailed.

And we know, from personal experience, that the Incarnation embodies the one truly saving principle. If you want to redeem that other man, who is down in the mire, you must in a true sense make yourself his flesh. You must understand that his temptations are not as mild as yours probably have been, that his hereditary stains and bias are probably deeper and more pronounced than yours. To be a redeemer of men, you must have the gift of being able to incarnate yourself in their flesh. The successful missionary is he who, remaining true to Christ, makes himself, as it were, a Chinaman or Hindu. To get to a man's heart, you must not merely wear his clothes, you must put yourself into his flesh. The great secret of success in Christian work is to have that sympathy by which, as it were, you can

become that other person whom you wish to save, yet always taking with you the Christ Spirit. Jesus was God's Son made Incarnate, that He might be, as it were, one of ourselves, dwelling in our flesh, understanding our weaknesses, knowing our temptations, that we in turn, becoming through His grace such as He is, might not merely be made in God's image, but permeated by His Spirit. For the crown of the religious life is won when God through Christ becomes, as it were, incarnate in us.

CHAPTER V

THE SOUL-CRY AND THE SEARCH AFTER GOD

I

THE classic expression of what we may call the soul-cry is found in the words, “ For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ? ” It is the cry of that which is within us, of that which is conscious of being greater and more enduring than the material world, of that which is our real self. Wherever the soul awakes, the cry comes. Every form of religion, even the most crude and rudimentary, is a witness to its existence. It means realization, in part at least, of the self, the sense of responsibility for personality, here and hereafter. In its ultimate dealings with God, the soul must act alone.¹ Religions where the priest is too prominent tend, from their very nature, to become artificial. The secret of reality in re-

¹ “ Single is each man born into the world ; single he dies ; single he receives the reward of his good deeds, and single the punishment of his evil deeds ” (*Institutes of Manu*).

ligion is immediateness, personal directness. Each human heart has its sphere of living experience, where God and it are face to face, and others, from the very nature of the experience, must be content to remain outsiders.

The bias of the times is to think, feel, and act socially, to conceive of man as bound by indissoluble ties to his fellow-men. There is undoubtedly the social side of religion, which is entitled to receive its due; but the ultimate decisions of the religious life are neither made by us to society, nor by society for us, but by each one of us to God. In times of great spiritual awakening, large numbers of men may be quickened to life; but, to be of any religious value, the quickening must be a fact actually accomplished in each individual life. One may die in the wilderness, a man lovable and loving, and yet not a soul may know at the time the agonies of his last moments. Only his bleached skeleton, discovered, it may be, years afterwards, suggests the unrecorded tale of his sufferings. Another man may be swept overboard in a mid-Atlantic storm, and no human ear may hear his last anguished prayer. God alone, and the sea, which, by and by, hurls up on the rocks his unrecognizable fragments, thoughtless as the seaweed,

hear it. These are extreme examples, but they illustrate what is true in every case. The soul-cry, while common to all members of society, is a cry which originates in the individual soul apart, and the answer to it must come to the individual soul alone. Men cannot be saved wholesale. Men cannot be swept in a body into the Kingdom of Heaven : each must find his way himself.

The Fundamentals of the Christian Faith merit attention, if for nothing else, because they claim to point the way to the answer to this soul-cry. If this claim is valid, they afford a solution to a perennial problem. They are able to do what all modern science does not in the least profess to accomplish : they answer the cry of the human soul. All religion may be regarded as an effort to solve this. Religion is universal. There are no tribes of atheists. Professor Flint's chapter, in his *Anti-theistic Theories*, could be illustrated by a vast body of new matter, provided alike by the more recent books of travel, and by a rich store of fresh anthropological studies which have been made since he wrote his valuable book ; but his main thesis stands secure. Religion is a fact of human life. Its roots are human nature itself. The soul-cry

is the most human of all cries. In Animism, Fetishism, Ancestor-worship, Polytheism, Theism, Pantheism, Panentheism, Positivism, and even in the religion of Naturalism, above the grind of the more or less machine universe, there is the soul-cry. It is the voice which is never silent. It is the cry of need which cannot be stilled. It is not to be measured, in its vehemence, by the prevailing type of civilization. It is heard in the hearts of contemporary leaders of science and literature. Never, perhaps, was it more persistent in its demand for expression than in ancient Egypt. The permanence of Egyptian tomb and temple is a time-defying witness. Men have many other interests ; the characteristic notes of one form of civilization may be widely divergent from those of another ; but they always return to the soul-cry, to which we claim, on grounds of intrinsic value and personal testimony, the doctrines of the Christian Faith, the Fundamentals, are the only satisfying answer.

In view of this, Christianity is the one fact of the personal and social life which cannot be neglected. Nor can any one urge the claim to neglect, either on grounds of ignorance, or of other interests. The disciples were rude, unlettered men. They had pressing secular in-

terests which they might have urged as sufficient reason for not following Christ. But so intense was the soul-cry within them, so unmistakable was their vision of the all-importance of the answer being given to this cry, that no sacrifice seemed too great to make in order to be certain. They are an illustration also of the truth that a high degree of culture is not necessary to the reality of this cry, nor to the feeling of an overpowering need to go where it leads. A man may grasp, and realize the Fundamentals, without ever seeing a college gate ; while a university don may miss them altogether, and go about through the gleam of the garish day, dying of unsatisfied soul-hunger. Attention to other duties, scientific, economic, political, ecclesiastical, and domestic, are legitimate ; but they may not deprive the soul-cry of its right to receive first and chief attention. People who think to satisfy their souls by what are really secondary interests are as sane as the man who would propose to quench the excruciating pangs of thirst by vivid descriptions of mountain scenery, or think to keep the body of a man alive by warm clothing when he was already stark dead through heart-failure.

The Christian Fundamentals are the most im-

portant fact in the world. They alone give us sure light concerning God, man, redemption, and destiny. Christianity is the Absolute Religion, the religion of the One Living God, God in all, and all in God. Christianity is not merely purer, fuller, and truer than all other religions, not merely right where they are wrong, and certain where they are doubtful, but absolute, final, and all-sufficient, and so able to give the one satisfying answer to the soul-cry. This is not hypothesis, but fact of experience. The peace of the Christian is that his life is voluntarily surrendered to co-operate with God. His meat and his drink is to do the Father's will. Those who know the Christian Fundamentals, and realize them, have peace and certainty. They know that their sins are forgiven. They are sure of their Father's love. They know that they will be kept to the end here on earth, and preserved from the horror of eternal death beyond this present life.¹ The blessedness of the future state is as certain to them as God's gift already received, this

¹ "Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory" (Ps. lxxiii. 24).

Alike in the Old Testament and in the New the horror of death is due to fear of eternal separation from the living God (Kennedy, *St. Paul's Conceptions of the Last Things*, pp. 103 ff.).

present life. Beyond the dividing-line of physical death they will be exalted to a higher state, freed alike from the burden of bodily weakness and moral temptations, and therefore able to enjoy unlimited felicity in the divine service. The soul-life on earth, even when a man is safely in the Kingdom of God, is always a warfare. He is conscious of good and evil influences which, in an unaccountable way, play their part in the inner sphere of his life ; but it is a certainty of those who have answered the soul-cry in the realization of the Fundamentals that, in the hereafter of the Kingdom, the malicious influences will be gone. The moral and spiritual warfare of the Christian continues ; but it is a warfare in which victory is assured. All the real powers of the Universe are fighting on the side of the Christian soul which has discovered the secret of the practical realization of the Fundamentals. Beyond death there will be full and final deliverance. The dream of the mystics will be realized: it will be one long, calm day of the soul in God. The man who has realized the realities of the Revelation of Christ in his life knows that the entire Universe is an expression of the conscious will and Personality of God ; but that, at the same time, God in

Christ stands in a special relationship to man, because man is the part of creation most resembling God. The will, in the case of man, is conscious, both from God's point of view and from man's. The religious man, in the Christian sense, is therefore the man who raises himself out of the sphere of the unconscious realization of God's will into the conscious and co-operative, along the Christ way.

Before leaving this part of our subject, it is well to refer to a relative difficulty, and to two modern types of danger. The difficulty is that many people cannot understand how, if this soul-hunger be an essential part of human nature, the one adequate answer has come so late, after man has been in the world probably a million and a half years. Our reply is that the soul-cry is itself fundamental or human ; but God's plan with humanity, in its life on earth, is progressive. All the greatest things in human life have come in the course of human development. This is an historical fact, which we have simply to accept, unless we are prepared to challenge the wisdom of the Divine Purpose, which would mean a demand on our part for a fancy humanity. The hunger for God has increased with the ages. The more spiritual a man becomes,

the more intense is his soul-cry. It has come to its fullness very much in the same way as articulate speech. Man, we believe, had from the first the power of making his wants known to his fellows¹; but he did not possess the wealth of words in the *Century Dictionary*. The soul-cry has always been in man; but, while gradually becoming more articulate, it is even yet only on the way to its fullest articulation. There is evidence of this in the teaching of Jesus. There is New Testament evidence, originating out of the influence of Jesus, that there was a retrospective answer to the soul-cry, as well as a contemporary and prospective. Jesus preached to the spirits in prison.² We must, in any case, accept the facts which are not of our making—the fundamental want of the human spirit expressed in the soul-cry, the universal effort to answer it, the one satisfactory answer given in Jesus, in His doctrine, which is also His life—His life in us, and we alive in Him.³ Then there are two grave dangers. One is that people should

¹ "Even in Pithecanthropus, the parts of the brain connected with the faculty of speech are present" (Keith, *The Antiquity of Man*, p. 269).

² 1 Peter iii. 19.

³ Cp. The "mystic genitive" of A. Deissmann (*St. Paul*, p. 141).

accept the all-sufficiency of Christianity, in the same way as a man might subscribe a mere formula, but without personal realization. There is nothing wrong in a man subscribing to a Confession of Faith. What is wrong is that a man subscribes to a confession without having had any real personal experience of the living realization of the principles embodied in the confession. If a man has known the essential principles of the teaching of Jesus in his own life as vitalizing, edifying forces, then he is quite entitled to put his name to a document containing a succinct statement of these doctrines. What is wrong is where men, through blind acceptance of some established authority, or simply because of the custom prevailing among their particular set, give mere external adhesion to a creed, which is not the paramount force in their lives. The Fundamentals afford an answer to the soul-cry only when they are living realities, quickened into being in the sphere of the personal life. Otherwise they are no more efficient to save than an army on paper would be to fight a nation's battles, or the vast store of gold, which we are told is in a state of solution in sea-water, would be to buy our daily bread. Christianity is a soul-life rather than a pure knowledge.

It was such in Jesus Christ, and even in His greatest expositor, the Apostle Paul, with all his splendid array of lore and logic. We can distinguish between the doctrinal definition of the Fundamentals and their practical realization, very much in the same way as we distinguish between pure and applied mathematics ; but, so far as the satisfaction of the soul-cry is concerned, the Fundamentals must be applied. No one would care to trust himself in a ship where captain and officers knew only the theory of navigation, but had never been on board a vessel before. A man may be an expert in the knowledge of the Egyptian Book of the Dead, and yet not believe in the tenets of the Egyptian religion. A man may have a splendid examination knowledge of Theology, and may still be the most miserable of preachers. The story is told of how once Satan occupied a pulpit, and, as it appeared to one of his demons present, preached with remarkable eloquence ; but, as Satan afterwards assured him, the preaching would do no good, for it wanted unction. Religion, to be saving, must be personal and living. It must have the Pleroma.

Religions have died in the past because they became merely objective. Religion must be

subjective and personal, to be living. If the Church is not to become a charnel-house, it must aim at getting souls alive in Christ. A creed will naturally follow out of the living reality of this Christian life ; but it is likely to be a simple creed, one in regard to which the believer can have no doubt, and in regard to which the believer stands on the solid ground, as over against the unbeliever, that he has put the principles of his creed into living, enlightened practice, and then found them to be practically true. It is only on the basis of a living, personal religious experience that we can build a creed which is capable of satisfying the scientific spirit of the age. The Christian must be able to say, "My life as a Christian is a field of practical experience, a world, if you like, of spiritual experiment and verification, and my creed is the statement of the principles found to be pragmatically true in that sphere of personal, religious experience." Christianity is the Faith which absolutely saves the soul, here and hereafter, because it is knowledge, faith, and love, living in the soul, as its most real experience. When practically realized, the Fundamentals, as it were, spring into life. They are like the corn-seed, apparently dry and dead as it lies

in your hand ; but put it into the ground, let it feel the embrace of mother earth, the gentle touch of April shower, the call of the Virgin Spring blowing through the woods, and forthwith it will germinate, and presently it will burst forth into living green. Religion, to be of value, must be practical, personal experience ; God, the fact of facts, in our life, and we alive in His Kingdom. This practical realization implies at once faith¹ and knowledge.² We know in part, but our knowledge is real knowledge, knowledge which is guaranteed to us as authentic by the highest authority, the Divine Son Himself. Faith leads us on where our knowledge fails. If we are quite certain that our friend is reliable, we trust him in matters where he assures us he knows, even though we cannot be quite certain that we know. Life is increasingly full of illustrations of this principle. The more there is of specialization, the greater will the demand be for faith on the part of one type of specialist in another. The theologian trusts the thoroughly trained doctor with the treatment of

¹ " Faith saves a man, and faith is a submission to the authority of a revelation " (Herrmann, *Faith and Morals*, p. 34).

² " The man of science has learned to believe in justification, not by faith, but by verification " (Huxley).

his ailment, the doctor trusts the well-equipped theological thinker to give him the best counsel in the matters of the soul. The man who thinks he can form a competent judgment on all spheres of modern research is of the same class as the perfectionist in morals: he is either a fool or an impostor. The greater our human knowledge will become, the more demand there will be that a master in one department should trust an expert in another. Life is full of mysteries. The higher mathematics is a mystery to the expert in farm-stock; the master of the integral calculus would be perfectly at sea if asked to undertake the management of a Sunday School, supposing he had no previous training.

But there is an even deeper demand for faith. Increase even in scientific knowledge has not removed the perennial mysteries of life and death: it has rather shown them in sterner proportions. All that science can fairly claim to have done is to have penetrated some little way into the jungle. It has not pierced it, it has rather shown us that the jungle gets deeper and more bewildering the farther we force our way into it. The tiger springs, and crushes to violent death an innocent girl not yet out of her teens. A brave man leaps overboard into a dangerous

sea to save a drowning man who is not even of his own kith and kin, and is himself dragged down to death. Even in regard to God, the knowledge of whom is the most certain of all knowledge, we recognize that there is a positive and a negative aspect of our understanding of His ways. We know God to be our Father. He, as such, embodies all that we conceive of as truest and best in human fatherhood ; but we believe that in Him there exist unlimited reserves of bounty and of grace, such as we cannot positively conceive. We have a parallel in our knowledge of the material universe. We see Mars with the naked eye ; we see it better through the telescope ; we know its physical constituents through the spectroscope ; we can by mathematical calculation map its orbit ; but we cannot tell whether it is now, or has ever been, inhabited.

In religion, however, we are not confined to knowledge. We have certain great determinative principles of knowledge, such as the infinite mercy of God, made known to us, and on the basis of these we can live our life of faith in regard to matters which are in part, or altogether, surrounded with mystery. In religion, faith is added to knowledge, and becomes a great vitalizing and guiding force

in the personal and Church life. We are constrained to trust, through the testimony of our own certain personal experience, even where we cannot actually know. On the ground, for example, of God's unfailing goodness to us in our past life, we go forward fearlessly to engage some novel and startling difficulty of our life, depending on the sure help of Him who has never deceived us in the years that lie behind. We believe in God as our Father ; all our past life has led us to feel certain of this ; yet we frankly recognize that His Fatherhood must transcend, alike in scope and in excellence, the most ideal human fatherhood. We know that the path of true human progress is the way of persistent obedience to God's will, and that thereby the realization of human brotherhood is secured, in the light of Christ's Sonship ; but we have still faith in God when His will seems mysterious to us, and we have faith that the day will come when all men will live as brothers in peace and love even though the instruments of war were never so deadly as now. We have, as it were, caught glimpses of the sun shining in the heaven, and no mist or rain will ever deprive us, even for a faltering moment, of the certainty of that sun, and its

power to dispel ultimately every cloud and mist, and to bring in the eternal summer day of the saints. Nobody who has read the story of the old Assyrian kings in their own words¹ and thought, by way of contrast, of the mission of the red-cross nurse, could fail to have their faith in the ultimate victory of the God of all mercies strengthened.

The realization of the Fundamentals also forthwith kindles love, a passionate desire to give Christianity the universal sway over the human heart which it is entitled to have. Love prompts to missionary zeal, whether in the Home or Foreign Field. Love warns the man of the newer generation that the youth have not the opportunities for calm appropriation of the eternal verities which the fathers had before the great economic and industrial expansion of last century. Love says, "Christianity must not only be saved to this generation, but steps must be taken to extend its healing, redeeming influence to

¹ Assurnazirpal in 882 B.C. says: "I built a wall before the great gates of the city; I flayed the chiefs of the revolt, and with their skins I covered the wall. Some were immured alive in the masonry, others were crucified or impaled along the wall. I had some of them flayed in my presence, and had the wall hung with their skins. I arranged their heads like crowns and their transfixed bodies in the form of garlands." (Seignobos's *History of Civilization*, p. 40).

all." Our infirmaries are institutions for saving and restoring the present life ; our practical Christianity is an instrument for saving the eternal life in man. Active missionary life begets blessedness. Only he has a lasting sense of delight who has risen to feel that he has been the means, under God, of begetting an eternity of joy in a brother's soul. Then altogether, the Fundamentals, to be known, must be practically realized in a man's own heart, and being such in knowledge and faith, love springs up, and thereby the ardent desire to minister, and thereby again the whole round of the life of blessedness in the kingdom, arise. The genuine Christian life is a truly apostolic life, a life, in public or in private, for Christ's sake.¹

There is a further danger to which we would briefly refer. There is a modern school of thinkers who tell us that the soul-cry is more social than personal, and to be answered not individually, nor now, but in some dim terrestrial hereafter of the evolution of society, in a kind of far-off ideal state of human life. But this explanation is not true to fact. The

¹ "To be ethical to-day means . . . to promote, so far as in one lies, the well-being of the world" (McGiffert, *Hibbert Journal*, July 1907).

soul-cry is, in the first instance, an individual cry, to be answered here and now. A man feels bound to determine forthwith, and for himself, his future in this life and in the beyond. He realizes that he is being hurried on, relentlessly carried forward, through childhood, youth, young manhood, middle age, grey hairs, senile decay, or some part of these, to death and eternity. He knows that there may possibly be a sudden rupture at any point on the life-way, and the soul-cry is not so much interested in the earthly comfort, social or otherwise, of men ten thousand years hence ; but in the solemn afterwards of itself as an individual soul, charged with a serious personal responsibility for its own destiny. To tell us that the soul is to be realized socially in a glorified social life hereafter on earth is to give an answer to a totally different question, and to shirk reply to the cry of the soul itself.

Two reasons in vindication of this statement may be given : (1) The soul-cry is known to be answered in true Christian lives. The man who, in his personal life, has truly proved that the reality of all realities to him is God the Father, God revealed in the Incarnate Son, God source of redemption, God giver of immortality, to all who seek it along the

Christ-way—surrender, sonship, sacrifice, the life of the Kingdom—this man knows the question of the soul's life and destiny has been for ever answered. No progress in civilization, no development in the personal or social life, will ever change this, that goes to the root of all things for him. He has peace, assurance, joy, confidence, certainty. He recognizes that the things which matter are the things eternal. The vision has been given to him, and he knows that the curse of Mammon is that, even while he bedecks his votaries with gold and jewels, he drags them down morally into the mire. The soul-cry is not only the most real of all human cries ; but, to him who is in Christ, the song of the redeemed.

But again (2) the far-off ideal society, in which we are told the soul-cry is realized socially, is purely imaginary. It would still leave the personal nature of the soul-cry untouched. The Arcadias of the future can no more afford redemption and assurance to the soul, as touching eternal things, than did the golden Arcadias of the past, over which writers of a former age exercised their fancy. They do not come within the sphere of practical Soteriology. Psychologically the exponents of the social redemptive scheme are not true

to fact, and are therefore not scientific. The more the soul is alive, the louder, the more persistent is its cry, that the settlement be made for it here and now. Our hearts are restless, and they cannot find rest save in God, the Father of our spirits, and in the Kingdom of Jesus, His Son, on whose breast alone the lost child's cry is transformed into a sob of joy, which the child knows will be unending joy.

II

The history of mankind has been one long search after God. All religion, rightly understood, may be regarded as seeking for Him. The contemptuous rejection of the great ethnic religions, or their more modest sister-faiths, as mere idolatry, is not only unscientific, but unchristian. To fail to see their meaning, as examples of this long search after God, is to minimize God's universal Providence, and His age-long desire to draw His children to His heart of infinite love. One of the most hopeful features of modern missionary effort is the earnest desire to understand the particular faith with which each missionary comes into contact, among the special people whom he wants to bring to Christ. The Jesus Christ

of the modern Church is not only the Jesus who is able to save all who come to Him in this present generation ; but the Christ who is the expression of the Father's desire to save, in all ages of time, and in response to all religious yearnings. God is not merely the eternal God in the ontological sense, but the God who has always had a redeeming purpose towards men, and who has been working even in those that we call pagan beliefs. Men were seeking for God in the cheerless grey of humanity's morning. They sought for Him before the human mind had become an instrument sufficiently strong and acute to carve out of known existence what we mean by philosophy. They groped after Him when as yet they were not able to conceive clearly the distinction between spirit and matter, between the ego and the non-ego, when as yet they were not capable of grasping the idea of a First Cause, or the Divine Personality, or what we moderns mean by Nature or History. Men felt that in a world of vague uncertain happenings there must be that which had a regulative power, and which was higher than themselves. Men felt that God must be, before they had the ability to formulate any theistic proof.

The history of pagan religions may be described as a long search for God, a search in which we know He must ever have been interested, a search embodying many elements, whose combination increasingly tended towards the enrichment of life and the discovery of what God really is.

But while all this must in fairness be said of the non-Christian religions, it must with equal frankness be acknowledged that none of these religions, valuable as the contribution of each was to the enrichment of human life, laid hold of what is most truly characteristic, and savingly most precious in the Nature of God.

The ancient Chinese religion was a union of nature-worship and ancestor-worship. Heaven was a vaguely personal god, moral, the origin of the order of nature, and the director of human lives. Heaven rewards the righteous and brings misery on the wicked. No attempt was made by Confucius to explain the ultimate origin of heaven and earth. They were simply accepted as facts. The greatest importance was attached by Confucius to filial piety. The nature of man, in his view, was essentially good. Wang Ch'ung was a materialistic monist; taught that heaven

is mere matter, and can take no interest in man, and that, just as there is no consciousness in man before birth, so death means the cessation of all conscious life. Chu Hi, the foremost leader in the Confucian revival, rejected the idea of a heavenly emperor, but maintained that there is an incorporeal, yet ever immanent, intelligence. Lao-tse endeavoured to do that from which Confucius refrained, and sought to penetrate to the ultimate reality which lies behind all mere phenomena. He was practically an agnostic, who declared the Absolute to be unknowable, yet at the same time he urged on men a lofty morality, bidding them recompense injury with kindness. While denying the existence of the Personal God, he clearly recognized that there is always reward or punishment for good or evil done.

Altogether, while there are thus two distinct tendencies in ancient Chinese religion, the one reaching up towards the conception of heaven as personal, the other down towards an agnostic and purely materialistic conception of the universe, there is much that is salutary in ethics, and some things which point the way towards a right view of God and His universe. Confucius indeed discouraged speculation in

regard to the ultimate problems of life and being, in this respect anticipating the Positivism of Comte, yet he sought to realize a kind of heaven on earth, an ideal society in which each man should do his duty to every other man. His system is thus essentially social and ethical. Still the strong paternal element in the system, while not actually rising to the conception of the Fatherhood of God, and his injunction to "recompense injury with justice, and kindness with kindness," are at least a step towards Christ's revelation of the Fatherhood, and His law of love, even towards enemies. And while Confucius is neither clear nor consistent in his affirmation of the personality of heaven, still, by the very fact of pointing men upwards, he prepared the way for the time when men would find the Personal God there.¹

In ancient Egypt, in the earliest times, each city had its own god, which was worshipped in the form of some animal. But while the god is worshipped in the form of a beast, the god himself "is inwardly not beast, but man."² In course of time Horus became the

¹ For the Chinese religions see G. F. Moore, *History of Religions*, vol. i. pp. 6-10, 23-7, 35-6, 41-3, 46-7, 50-5, 64.

² Cp. G. F. Moore, *ibid.* vol. i. p. 151.

first national god in Egypt—Horus, who was the sky, whose eye is the sun, or sometimes the sun itself. The king was Horus himself in human form. Later on, under the influence of the priests of Heliopolis, Re, the visible sun in the sky, became the greatest of the gods. Osiris held an important place, because he was the god who, having died, came to life again, and was the god in whose presence the soul of the departed had to render an account for the deeds done in the body. While originally he was a god dwelling in the realm of the dead,¹ he ultimately became transported to the sky. During the rule of the Hyksos the principal god was Set, the enemy of Horus and Osiris. After the Hyksos were driven out the premier place was occupied by the warlike Amon. Under Amen-hotep IV² an effort was made to establish a pure monotheism, the worship of Aton, who was the solar orb, or disc visible in the sky.

In the Egyptian religion there is a clear apprehension of the personal nature of deity, of the moral order of the universe, of stringent

¹ Cp. Osiris, the personification of death (Budge, *Legends of the Gods*, p. 82).

² Cp. L. W. King, *A History of Babylon*, vol. ii. p. 219; H. R. Hall, *The Ancient History of the Near East*, pp. 305 f.

reward or punishment for good or evil done, of personal survival, and of a destiny of weal or woe in the hereafter, determined by the deeds done in the body.¹ The ancient Egyptians thus made three important discoveries—that the Divine is the source of light and life, that human personality is indestructible, and that there is a fundamental distinction between good and evil, upon the persistent choice of either of which the blessedness or curse of destiny depends.

Enlil of Nippur was the head of the old Sumerian pantheon.² Anu, Enlil, and Ea constitute the original divine triad.³ Anu presides in heaven, Enlil in the earth with the circumambient air, and Ea in the waters. A kind of secondary triad was formed by the principal gods of the older Semitic inhabitants of Babylonia, consisting of Sin, Shamash, and Ishtar. Sometimes Adad takes the place of

¹ Re went up into heaven and prepared a place to which the righteous might come (Budge, *Legends of the Gods*, p. 29.) The cult of Isis was particularly welcome to the Western world, because it gave promise of a future life and peace and happiness (Budge, *Ibid.* p. 83).

² Cp. P. S. P. Handcock, *Mesopotamian Archaeology*, p. 62; M. Jastrow, *The Civilization of Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 125, 187, 189; L. W. King, *A History of Sumer and Akkad*, vol. i. p. 85.

³ Cp. L. W. King, *A History of Babylon*, vol. ii. p. 95.

Ishtar in the Amorite triad.¹ Under the new dynasty, when Babylon became the capital, Marduk² was elevated to the position of chief god, and the priests appropriated for him the attributes of Enlil. Under this new religious system the origin of all things was declared to be the primeval watery chaos represented by the pair Apsu and Tiamat.³ The chief god of the Assyrians was Assur, who is marked by aloofness of character and freedom of movement. On the whole, the religion of Babylonia remained at a comparatively low level. There is no clear approach to monotheism. On the other hand, there is a vivid recognition of the reality of evil in the world, of the distinction between good and evil, and of the nemesis of wrong-doing, so that even the offspring of those who deal unjustly will not prosper.⁴ In the conception of the divine triads, there is a kind of vague anticipation of the Trinity. As regards the here-

¹ Cp. M. Jastrow, *The Civilization of Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 225.

² Cp. P. S. P. Handcock, *Mesopotamian Archaeology*, p. 72, 172, 386; M. Jastrow, *The Civilization of Babylonia and Assyria*, pp. 211-12, 217.

³ Cp. C. J. Ball, *Light from the East, Babylonian Epic of Creation*, pp. 1-19.

⁴ Cp. Hymn to Shamash. M. Jastrow, *The Civilization of Babylonia and Assyria*, pp. 240, 243, 475.

after, there is much vagueness in the Babylonian-Assyrian religion, which makes no distinction between the fate of the faithful and the unfaithful departed as such in the halls of Avalu.¹

In the Vedic age, Indra holds the first place among the Indian gods, and guides his people in war. Varuna is the universal monarch, who has established heaven and earth, makes the sun to shine, upholds the natural and moral law of the world, and sees and punishes all wrong-doing. The gods are, with one exception, Rudra, friendly towards men, yet there are many demons and evil spirits continually working against human well-being. Expiation must be made for sin committed. The bad are eventually hurled down into fathomless darkness, whence none of them will ever emerge. The blessed dead have their home in the heaven of light. In the Rig-veda there is no mention of transmigration either for the righteous or the wicked. In course of time Brihaspati, the prayer-god, the personification of prayer, logically became the

¹ For the Babylonian-Assyrian religion, see P. S. P. Handcock, *Mesopotamian Archaeology*. The only thing that makes a difference in the hereafter is whether the dead have received a proper burial, and sufficient sustenance, or not. P. S. P. Handcock, *Mesopotamian Archaeology*, pp. 399-403.

greatest god. In the Upanishads the human *ātman*—the empirical self, or rather the real self—becomes identical with the *ātman* in the universe, the Brahman. This conception tended towards an idealistic monism, but in actual practice inclined to produce either pantheism or theism. In the Upanishads the doctrine of the transmigration of souls is clearly set forth, and is associated with a stern emphasis laid on retribution.

Jainism lodged activity, not in the primary substance, but in the individual soul, set up a strongly atheistic, dualistic system, reaffirmed the doctrine of transmigration, and proclaimed that the only way to obtain deliverance was to get quit of *karma*, by means of right faith, right knowledge, right living. By this means the state of Nirvana is finally attained—a state, however, which does not involve the cessation of consciousness.

Siddhartha, who afterwards became Buddha, the enlightened, taught that all that constitutes bodily existence involves suffering, and that the root-cause of this is desire, or craving, emphasized the certainty of blessing following well-doing,¹ and punishment and misery

¹ "He who, holding the good life to be the greatest [good], does works of merit, passes, covering over much that per-

evil-doing, and urged that each man must himself work out his own salvation. He also maintained that Nirvana is to be secured by bringing to an end *karma*, the will to be ; but avoided answering the question whether the saint continued to exist in any sense after death.

In Hinduism there is at least an effort to reach monotheism.

While there is thus considerable diversity of view in the Indian religions taken as a whole, certain important elements are clearly contributed. There is a suggestion of the Trinity in the Brahmanical triad, Brahman the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver, and Siva the Destroyer. There is clear apprehension of moral and natural law, of the antithesis between the good and the evil, of personal responsibility, and of retribution and reward. A valuable contribution is afforded by the recognition of the universality of suffering, and the root-cause of it in human desire.¹

chance is evil-doing, into heaven as into his own house ; therefore will the wise man continually take delight in works of merit " (*The Mahāvamsa, or the Great Chronicle of Ceylon*, Pali Text Society, p. 227).

¹ For the Indian religions, see G. F. Moore, *History of Religions*, vol i. pp. 249-59, 261, 265-70, 273-4, 281-6, 289, 292-6, 344, 355.

In the case of the Hittite religion much research is still necessary before some of the most important points are definitely settled; but Dr. Farnell tells us that if we were to concentrate our attention on the Boghaz-Keui reliefs alone, "we might discover a Hittite trinity of Father, Mother, and Son¹;" yet points out, at the same time, that the other Hittite evidence does not supply any confirmation of this.

Zoroastrianism, the religion of ancient Persia, was the result of a prophetic reformation of the old Iranian religion. Its characteristic conception is the vivid recognition of the antagonism between good and evil, an antagonism which runs through nature as well as through humanity. "Zoroaster's message is a way of salvation from destruction revealed by Ahura-Mazda, who knows."² According to Zoroaster, every man has the power to decide for himself,³ and he demands that each one must decide for Ahura-Mazda and choose the

¹ Cp. L. R. Farnell, *Greece and Babylon*, p. 186. Teshub, "the paramount deity of the Hittite State, . . . was primarily a god of war." H. R. Hall, *The Ancient History of the Near East*, pp. 332, 351; L. W. King, *A History of Babylon*, vol. ii. p. 228.

² Cp. G. F. Moore, *History of Religions*, vol. i. p. 364.

³ Cp. M. N. Dhalla, *Zoroastrian Theology*, p. 24.

way of truth and goodness. A relentless warfare must be carried on against evil. Good is to be done to the good, but every possible harm is, at the same time, to be done to the law-breaker, the wrong-doer. This principle is to be applied to the animal world as well as to the world of mankind. Zoroastrianism is essentially a monotheistic religion. Ahura-Mazda exercises supreme rule without rival or partner. He is the creator of the world and all that is therein. He knows all, sees all, everything that is, everything that is going to happen ; even the most hidden human acts are plain to his all-searching gaze, and by his hands each man is requited for his deeds, both in this world and the world to come. In keeping with the absolute goodness of Ahura-Mazda is the demand that his saints should be internally as well as externally good, should realize the ideal—"good thoughts, good words, good deeds." Characteristic of Zoroastrianism is its doctrine of universal restitution. After a period of probation for the good in heaven and of hell for the sinners, there is to be a general resurrection. Then there follows a rigid separation of the good from the evil. The former return to heaven, the latter to hell, where they suffer excruciating miseries for their sins, in

the actual body. After this has continued for three days there comes the general purification by fiery trial of the wicked. Then all are restored, and even hell itself is reclaimed so as to provide a larger area for the beatific life of a completely restored humanity.¹

Of Zoroastrianism as a whole it may be confidently affirmed that no religion of the ancient pagan world so clearly laid hold of the conception of the oneness of deity or His essential goodness, and that no religion of those early days so vividly apprehended the fundamental antagonism of the evil and the good, or so virilely set itself to the eradication of what is wrong, demanding of the saints that they should strive not only for their own personal salvation, but for the deliverance of the soul of humanity. In view of these facts, it is certainly surprising that Zoroastrianism has never shown any signs of becoming a universal religion.²

Turning to those lands which have long been associated with the Greek tongue and Greek culture, we have to note the romantic discoveries which have been made in quite recent times in connection with the Ægean Archæo-

¹ Cp. M. N. Dhalla, *Zoroastrian Theology*, pp. 61-3, 181-3.

² Cp. M. N. Dhalla, *ibid.* p. 13.

logy.¹ No doubt many things must be brought to light before anything like a full or clear conception of the Minoan religion is ours. But certain facts are fairly well established. The Minoan religion, as Mr. Hogarth has said, was "a monotheistic-ditheistic worship of the goddess and her son-husband," of Rhea and Velchanos.² The evidence goes to show that there is an unmistakable similarity between the *Æ*gean religion and the characteristic cult of Anatolia, the worship of Kybele and Atys. Divinity was supposed to reside in sacred caves and in dark, rocky gorges. There the gods were worshipped. At the same time, the royal palaces were essentially temples, and the king was probably also chief priest. Perhaps the most striking feature of the Minoan religion was the belief that their god Velchanos, like Tammuz and Osiris, was a god who died.

The religious thought of the Greeks who came in and possessed themselves of the land is marked by characteristic originality, strength, and variety. Xenophanes conceived of the One not as a supramundane god, but as the

¹ For the Minoan religion see H. R. Hall, *Æ*gean Archaeology.

² Cp. H. R. Hall, *The Ancient History of the Near East*, pp. 52-3; *Æ*gean Archaeology, pp. 146-8.

universe itself, endowed with sense, thought, and purpose. Heraclitus denied to the universe either a beginning or a creator. In vivid contrast with what we have seen happened in the development of religion in Egypt, the religion of Greece was made, not under the leadership of the priest, but by the layman of genius. For this reason Greek religious thinking exercised a unique influence over the minds of the people. The poets and philosophers were also the greatest religious teachers. Sophocles made the important discovery that suffering is not necessarily evil. Socrates was convinced that no real harm could ever befall a truly good man, either in this life or the next, and that even death itself, whether it proved to be a dreamless sleep, or a simple migration into another world of delightful intercourse with the departed great and good, was in any case not an evil thing in itself, not a thing that any good man need fear. But greatest of all was the contribution made by the incomparable Plato, the true founder of theistic philosophy. To him both God and the human soul are immaterial. God is essentially goodness, and the soul of man is a stranger and sojourner on earth, bringing with it shadowy memories of the ideal world, passing through

the disciplinary experience of the earthly existence, and destined to an immortality the certainty of which could be demonstrated by irrefutable evidence. In the afterwards, according to Plato, there is blessedness for the good, suffering which is at once expiatory and remedial for those who are not hopelessly depraved, and a hell of torment without end for the incurably bad. It is not too much to affirm that it is on the foundation laid by Plato that alike Jewish, Christian, and Mahomedan theology is based, that his is the highest of all non-Christian conceptions of deity, and that it only fell short in its lack of a right appreciation of the distinctly personal note, and so of a clear apprehension of the Divine Fatherhood of God.

The lofty level attained by Plato was not maintained by subsequent thinkers of Greece. Aristotle set forth a system which is more dualistic than that established by Plato, and attributed to deity a transcendence which is more absolute. He urged the necessity to cultivate virtue as a habit acquired through the strenuous mastery and control of the appetites by the practical reason; but found no place in his system for the doctrine of personal immortality. To the Stoics, God,

while a living God, immanent in every particle of the material universe, is nevertheless Himself not immaterial. The entire world-process is the evolution of the one primal substance, which in its nature is an intelligence endowed with purpose. The system as a whole constitutes a "dynamic materialism."¹

Taken at its highest and best, Greek religious thought, as it is presented in Plato, is the nearest merely pagan approach to the sublime revelation made known through Jesus Christ, the Divine Son; is, in fact, rightly to be regarded as the most vivid non-Christian manifestation of the Father's constant desire to make Himself more fully known to His children.

Shinto, the religion of ancient Japan, is known to us through the sacred writings, the Kojiki, the oldest literary product of the Altaic group, the Nihongi and the Yengishiki. At the head of the pantheon is the sun-goddess, or, as in ancient Egypt, the highest deity is not the sky, but the sun. The deities are essentially nature-gods, endowed with personality. Ancestor-worship, while playing a part in the system, is, according to some eminent authorities, not a constituent element

¹ Cp. G. F. Moore, *History of Religions*, vol. i. p. 512.

of primitive Shinto. The Japanese religion, while a more recent product than those already dealt with, bears witness to two important facts—the kings are the direct descendants of the gods,¹ and specially of “The Impetuous Male Deity,” and there are no devotees of a non-Christian religion who have a more certain faith in the continued existence of the spirits of the departed than the believers in Shinto.²

In the god Baldur of the Scandinavian religion, Baldur the wise, the beautiful, the gentle, the pure, the well-beloved, Baldur who is treacherously slain, but will come again in the days of the new heaven and the new earth, we have a dream of the Christ of the resurrection, a vision of the truth that that which is truly of God cannot perish.

The modern enlightened attitude towards all non-Christian religions is one of fair-minded and sympathetic study and hearty

¹ In the story of the beautiful Iku-tama-yori-bime, there seems at first sight to be something corresponding to the Virgin-birth of Jesus; but in reality it turns out that she had been visited by a god in the form of a fair youth, so that the affair is to be classed with the amorous exploits recorded of the Greek deities.

² For the Japanese religion, see “A Translation of the Kojiki,” by Basil H. Chamberlain (*Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, vol. x.); and G. F. Moore, *History of Religions*, vol. i. pp. 94-112.

appreciation of whatever is good in them ; the acknowledgment that all religious life is one in the sense that all religion implies the age-long search after God, and the belief that all the seeking has not been on the part of men, that man has not merely felt the need of the Divine, but that the heart of God can never be satisfied without the educated love and reverence of His human children. We gladly recognize in these other faiths all their merits ; at the same time, we claim a similar frank and impartial consideration for our sacred books contained in the Bible, and for our Christian system of doctrine and practice.

The best of the ancient religions fall short of the conception of God in the Old Testament, even when we frankly recognize a kind of Trinity in the faiths of Egypt, Babylonia, and, most markedly of all, India, and admit that something very like monotheism was reached in Zoroastrianism and in Plato. Coming from the study of these other religions, we feel, alike in the oldest prophets and in the earliest historical books, a new atmosphere. In the very first chapters of the Old Testament God is the Creator, not in the pantheistic sense of compulsion, but of His own free power. He is the Creator and former of Nature, organic

and inorganic. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." He is the Personal God, who is not only the Source of human life, but enters into direct fellowship with man. His is the voice that is never silent in the garden of life, provided men have the power to hear.¹ He is the one Living and True God. Later on, He appears as the God of history, interested from the first in the world, and specially in men. He assumes for holy purposes a special attitude of choice and loving-kindness towards Israel, making a covenant with His people, giving them the moral law, obedience to which means the continuance of His loving favour. Yet even in the Old Testament there are moments of sublime vision, when the inspired writer catches glimpses of that larger heart of God which yearns for all His children, and of which these other faiths outside Israel were a witness. In Pharisaism, which in some respects is a degenerate form of the older Jewish faith, there is emphasis laid on the exalted Nature of God, raising Him unduly above His own world. He is essentially the Judge seated on His throne, and passing judgment on human acts.

¹ "The beasts can speak to us: is God lower than they?"
Gwatkin, *The Knowledge of God*, vol. i. p. 21.

Now Jesus Christ knew the doctrine of God, as it is taught alike in the Old Testament and in the Pharisaic system. He inherited the Old Testament view of God, and in a sense reaffirmed it. To Him, as to prophet and psalmist, God was the Supreme Creator, Lord of heaven and earth, Omnipotent, Omniscient, Eternal, and specially favourable to Israel. But in Jesus' teaching an entirely new note rings out. God is Love, not merely loving, but Love. There are people who do good actions; but no one would think of calling even the best of men absolute goodness; but God, as Jesus knew from direct personal knowledge, was not merely loving, but Love Himself—that is, love which is personal and ceaseless in its tireless activities. Jesus gave, as the key to the interpretation of all existence, the idea of infinite, ever-active, personal love. One way in which God revealed Himself, as Jesus knew Him, was in His boundless generosity. Even the distinction between the sinner and the saint does not, in some aspects, affect the expression of God's life as love. He is the Bountiful Father, who causes His sun to shine upon the good and the evil; who sends His rain, so important in such a land as Palestine was, on the fields of the just and the unjust. His generosity is far beyond what

we should expect to find in any earthly parent. He is like the king who forgives his unworthy servant an enormous sum, like the father who flings his arms round the foolish prodigal's neck, when he has slunk home with great uncertainty, as he might well feel, as to the kind of reception he was going to get. The first and dominating thought of Jesus concerning God was that He manifested Himself as universal, generous love. Wherever Jesus went, everything spoke to Him of God as love. The breath of the wayside flowers was God's love; the whisper of the west wind, the fair beauty of the shimmering lake, the green corn springing up responsive to the call of Spring, the patter of the rain—everything spoke to Jesus of God as love.

There is the other side of the problem of physical existence. There is the tiger-spring and the deadly cobra's poison, in neither of which cases innocence or morality is of any account. There is pain, it may be tragedy, to the just and to the unjust. One naturally asks did Jesus consider this aspect of existence at all. There can, I think, be no doubt that He did. He clearly saw the catastrophe of His own earthly life coming. He was conscious of that which no other sane man can claim

—that His life had been blameless. Yet He had to go down to death, along the most violent of paths. Is the pain, then, the tragedy of life, to be reckoned part of the love? In Jesus' heart, we have no doubt, the answer would have been that ultimately it was. The harder side of life, in measure shared by all, was soul-discipline. All things, even the greatest hardships, eventually work together for good to those who are, by their own desire, their Father's children. To Jesus the history of the soul was a history the last chapter of which would never be written, because it is an eternal history; and down the endless track of the soul's journey, it would become increasingly clear that the trials of the time-probation, however difficult to understand at the time when they occurred, were really expressions of the Father as Love.

Jesus at least hinted at what we moderns understand by the long, toilsome process of evolution, with its many sufferings and martyrdoms. Sir Frederick Treves has told us that, without pain, the human race would long ago have ceased to exist in the world. The hand of love must be the hand that checks, and even smites, when the necessity arises. Jesus did not want to lead men into the maze of the

apparent contradictions of life, or to explain to them all the mysteries of suffering. He gave them the great guiding principle of life —whatever may happen to you, never cease to hold to the belief that God is Love. The child goes out into the dark, led by his mother's hand ; the road is rough, and the night-rain upon his face stings ; he does not see the light of the home to which he is going with her ; but, with his hand in hers, he is sure that he is safe : he is in the care of love.

Jesus gave, in His interpretation of the character of God, a positive principle by which life could be lived under the most trying experiences. He bids men hope on almost against hope. The followers of Jesus are the only unqualified optimists in the world. Never mind, He seems to say, what may happen, you are always in the hands of Love. In view of this, there is a new light thrown upon Jesus' passionate desire to relieve human sufferings. Christ must have felt how hard it was for the chronic sufferer to be continually ailing, and yet to believe that God was Love. How could Omnipotent Love permit the loved one to be always in pain ? The modern Christian view, which has sprung out of the seed sown by Christ, a view which has surely been nourished by His

Spirit, is that God is Love ; but that, at the same time, His plan of human development necessitates suffering by the way, alike for the individual and for the race. There is doubtless unnecessary suffering, which is partly due to ignorance, partly due to deficient social organization, and partly due to what might be described as the misuse of the human will ; but suffering in itself we must come to regard as an expression of love. Let the scientist pursue his way seeking to remove all needless suffering. We are at one with the desire and hope of a Dr. Schaefer in foretelling the time when the latter days of a man's life will be comfortably relieved of much of that pain which men have had to endure in the past ; but it is vain to think that suffering itself will be entirely removed from the world. A disciplined Humanity, without the aid of suffering, is a thing inconceivable. There are many things by the way which the traveller, at the time, may view as hardships ; later on he discovers them to have been blessings in disguise. All things work together for good to those who have the disciplined courage to refuse to disbelieve that God is altogether Love. We cannot judge of the full beauty of the landscape when we are as yet forcing

our way through the jungle at the foot of the mountain. We must ascend to see. From the loftier standpoint of a fuller experience, which embraces something of that which lies beyond physical death, we shall see that even the difficulties and sorrows of life were expressions of the dealings of God, who is Love, with us. Never was God more certainly or more fully Love to Jesus than when He was hanging on the cross. It is not merely a case of a streak of gold-bearing quartz running through the mountain : the whole mountain is pure gold.

Jesus does not ignore nor deny the difficulties. But His own Personal knowledge of God enables Him to enunciate this fundamental truth, that God is Love. Hold fast to that, He ever seems to say, even though the dark problems of life may remain unsolved. The failure of modern Pessimism to explain these obscure problems just proves that they cannot be solved by us in our present state in any case. Jesus Christ, in His Revelation of the Father, gives the one way of unbroken victory to the human race. Guided by it, and at the same time inspired, we go breast-forward, pursuing our road, no matter what there may be that we cannot altogether understand. God is Love, in Nature, in history,

and in every human life, though specially in the life of the soul redeemed by fellowship with him. His interest in all His creatures is a loving, personal interest. Even the sparrow on the housetop, and the hungry ravens, are not forgotten. The very hairs of our head are numbered. God takes a more intimate personal interest in us even physically than we ourselves take. Illustration of this may be found in the way that the marvellous functions of the various organs of the body are performed —functions which even the most skilful scientist cannot claim to understand except in an imperfect and fragmentary way.

The social or national interest of God exhibited in the Old Testament has, in the teaching of Jesus, become personal. God, who is Love, embraces each individual. In Him we live, and move, and have our being, and it is altogether a living in Love. Precious in His sight is the humblest life. The wealth of a life is indeed measured by the amount of love which it has absorbed and radiated abroad. He yearns for each separate man, as if he were the only child. The Love which is universal is also personal. But the full value of this Love, which is God, can only be understood if we bear in mind that the same God who is Love

is also Justice. He is Justice because He is Love, and Love because He is Justice. Just because He is Love He must punish wilful sin—and that punishment may, under conditions of chronic rejection of His offer of Himself, become final, that is eternal. This is one all-important point, and the other is that, to realize the fullness of the Divine Nature as being Love, a man must be spiritually alive in Christ. "Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him." Love and Justice may to some appear to be contradictory, but in reality they never can be. They are ultimately the same. The sun, which modern science has shown to be the source of all terrestrial life,¹ without which first vegetable, then animal life, would perish, is the same sun which, if by a giant hand the earth were shifted some ninety million miles nearer to it, would forthwith shrivel up all life on its surface. The same sun is at once life and death. Unless, under certain conditions, it had the power of death as swift as it is sure, it could not sustain life. It all depends on what the relative position occupied by the earth in regard to the sun is whether the issue will be life or

¹ Cp. Bastian, *Nature and Origin of Living Matter*, p. 11.

death. And similar is it, touching the relationship of the human soul towards God. God, who is Love, will ever reveal Himself to us as the eternal source of life so long as we occupy towards Him the right relationship, which Jesus Christ exemplified in His human life on earth. To the sinful and defiant, the gross and unfaithful, He still appears as Love, but it is the Love which is Justice, condemnation, doom, eternal death. But to all those who are in Christ Jesus the Love is life and joy eternal.

In Jesus Christ we are new creations, not merely new in the sense of something that appears for the first time, but new in the sense of having in us the perpetual power of renewed life. Life is ever new. Through being in Christ we have within us this power of life, and are therefore creations of God ever being renewed from the spring of perpetual life. We have an analogy to the Love which is also Justice in the case of the wiser types of human fatherhood. The parent who supplies, for sentimental and therefore false reasons, an erring son with money which will only hurry him faster down the descent to moral ruin is no truly loving father. He is a weak, short-sighted sentimentalist. True love is always just. That is why God, who is Love,

is also Justice. But, as the Apostle Paul would have said, the clearest vision of God, as being truly Love, is to be had in a fact of history. A picture of the Crucifixion could have no better title than "God is Love." "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." That is, humanly speaking, true. But the cross revealed the Love Divine, the Love inspired with a great redemptive purpose, the Love which suffered for those who meantime at least were enemies. The Love on the cross is the personal counterpart of God's generous Love revealed in His morning gift of the sun, to good and evil alike; but never was that Love more sternly just than when Love hung on the Calvary Cross.

CHAPTER VI

LIFE IN THE DIVINE AND EVER-LIVING CHRIST

I

JESUS CHRIST is not only the ideal man—He is God. You never can put Him on the same level as even the best of men. No Christian can ever be the Christ. He is the crowning revelation of God's eternal plan of salvation. Sin had interrupted the course of God's purpose towards men. Prophet and psalmist had sought to arrest the sin-flood. Their efforts could only be fragmentary. Their own vision was imperfect. Being mere men, though good men, they were themselves hampered by the moral conflict in which man has ever to take his part. Their work was God's work, but, from the very nature of the human agents, it never could accomplish all that was necessary to be done, in order to save even the limited numbers of the children of Israel. There was but one sovereign remedy which was strong

enough—the gift of the Son. Jesus is God's Son. The certainty of this is demonstrated, alike by His success where the merely inspired prophet and psalmist failed, by the claims made by Himself in the days of His flesh, and made for Him by those who were of His immediate circle, and knew Him best, and by the fact of the Church in the world, as the truly redemptive force in the subsequent history of mankind. Jesus is God Himself present in a human heart, filling it with a love which is God. We too are sons, but only through Christ's redemption. Jesus is the only Way back to the Father's heart, back to the life in Love. Jesus is Son by His own Nature, we are only sons by adoption through Him. The certainty of Christ's Divinity is the certainty of the Fatherhood of God interested in us. Belief in the Divinity of the Son has ever been the secret of power and influence in the Church. The only Foundation, on which a Church defying all storms and change can rest, is Jesus Christ, the well-beloved Son. Unitarianism has produced men of great intellectual attainments and lofty moral character; but if the whole Church had had the power given to it to become Unitarian, and had decided to become such, the Christian

religion would have been dead and lost to the world. The Unitarian Church exists only as a kind of backwater, owing its continued and anaemic existence to the great onward sweeping current of that Christianity which lives by faith in the Divine Son. The path away from the Divine Christ ever leads into the wilderness. Brave and good men may decide to go that way, but their going does not change the desert into a garden of beauty and life.

No one need ever think that a Unitarian Church will justify the claim of Christianity to be a universal faith. The Church which has no Divine Christ can be at best but a sickly plant. The man who calls himself Christian, but has no living faith in the Divine Christ, lacks the true well-spring of spiritual life. Even the Roman Church, corrupt as her doctrine is, divorced from the love of truth for its own sake, fallacious in her bearing towards history and in her illogical attitude towards science, nevertheless retains a great hold on the minds of men, because, with all her error and superstition, she still keeps firm hold of the Divinity of Christ. She is like the case of a man who lives on, in spite of being stricken by some deadly disease, because of the original strength of his constitution, some of which still remains.

The glory of the true Reformed Church is that she has at once the freedom of the Unitarian and the firm grasp of the Divinity of Christ which characterizes the Roman Catholic, and yet without the fatal deficiencies of either. The Reformed Faith, while acknowledging Jesus Christ as Lord and God, holds her mind open to all well-established truth, historical and scientific alike. It is Jesus, the Divine Son, who is opening up the heart and mind of men to new discovery, and leading them on to greater achievement. The Reformed Church welcomes, in all truth, a revelation of the Divine Son, and, in all sincere and reverent truth-seekers, co-operators with God and His Christ. The God-Will which was present for a season, Incarnate in the human Jesus, is the God-Will which also rules the world, inspires and directs the Church, and guides the destiny of mankind, even when men are not always altogether conscious of that guidance.

Jesus, who is Divine, was, in His human life, the Sinless One. He is the Divine Son, not only from the point of view of ontology, but also in the sphere of morality. He came to the world, not merely giving men an immediate personal knowledge of God, His Father, but

exhibiting in His own human life the sublime holiness of God. He is the one truly great miracle of the moral life, the one example of one in human flesh who never yielded, never became the slave of sin. Yet the temptations of Jesus were absolutely real. Without this, Jesus could not have been a truly efficient Saviour of mankind. He would only have been a kind of dream of the moral life, but altogether outside the realm of practical moral helpfulness. Without the reality of temptation in the life of the Saviour, His sublime character would have been depressing rather than exhilarating to men in their bitter moral conflict.

The temptation of Jesus is to be regarded as an essential part of God's plan of salvation. It came in the form of evil suggestions, and assailed the human in Him. Yet there is no sin without consent of the will, and Jesus, because He was Divine, because His Will was the Divine Will, did not sin, did not yield to temptation. For to have done so would have been to will against His own Divine Will. It would have been a case of the Divine Will contradicting itself. Jesus had not only perfect *knowledge* of God's Will, but His Will was consciously God's Will. Yet was His temptation real, perhaps all the more

intense because of the special constitution of His nature. It is true to life that the finer dispositions have a peculiar acuteness and intensity in their temptations which coarse, blunt natures never experience. The earlier stages on the new road, which we enter after conversion, are marked by a special vehemence and persistency of temptation. Men feel temptations, as saints, in a way that they never felt them as sinners. Jesus' life, we may be sure, was a tempted life. "Lead us not into temptation" is not the least earnest of His petitions. The temptation so-called, namely, Jesus' experience after His baptism, is to be regarded, not so much as an isolated event as rather a sample of the history of Christ's soul-life.

Yet, in all things, Jesus' Will remained Divine. It never consented to sin. Suggestions came to Jesus, as to all. There are suggestions for which we ourselves are doubtless responsible, which, if not in themselves sin, imply a past history of sin. Evil habits and wrong associations produce their special crop of wicked suggestions. But, apart from these, no one can be in the world without having evil suggestions brought into the mind, even when their origins do not imply a guilty past. So it was with Jesus. You cannot help the sug-

gestions. No one can be human without having evil suggestions, and yet the suggestions in themselves are not sin. They are only the lure which you may refuse to accept, in one of two ways, either with internal consent alone, or with the further external sinful act.

From time to time society is startled to find men who have long been regarded as models of decent living, and pillars of morality and religion, actually in their private, hitherto unrevealed, life, living for years in a submerged cesspool of wicked passion, fostered and encouraged. The external life may be sinful, and yet unknown to the community. There is this type of external sin, and there is the other which flaunts itself in open defiance of all respectability ; and there is the type of sin which is internal only, and consists in the surrender of the will to temptation, without actual performance of the corresponding vicious act. For example, a man may gloat over imaginary sensual indulgence, without actually committing an external act of impurity. Now Jesus' sinlessness satisfied all three conditions. He did not merely succeed in impressing His disciples with the belief in the spotless purity of His external behaviour, but His external life in itself was actually and wholly sinless,

and the reason for this was that within Him there was no consent ever given to indulgence even in wicked thought or desire. Jesus' sinlessness was both internal and external. His morality is ideal, in the sense that it embraced His whole personal life in a round of sinless living. His blessedness was the joy of the faultlessly pure in heart.

The ethical standard of the redeemed life demands that a sustained effort should be made with a view to the whole life being made subject to the Will of God. A life so directed is forthwith inspired with the power to reject each evil suggestion which arises, as being at once offensive to God and destructive of the happiness of our own soul. The secret of Jesus' sinlessness was His Divinity. The only way by which we can truly overcome sin is to be permeated by the Holy Spirit of Christ. The one efficient antidote to evil suggestions is the Spirit of God reigning in the human heart.

Jesus the Sinless is also Jesus the Redeemer. His Divinity and sinless character were prerequisites, in order that He might be the all-sufficient Saviour. Christ, being God, has God's eternal purpose of salvation in His heart. And only a sinless Jesus could deliver man from his sin. The pre-conditions of Christ's per-

sonality, in order that He might be a sufficient Saviour, were that He should be the Divine Son, that God's Will should be in such manner His Will that sin became for Him a thing impossible, even when He fulfilled the conditions of the real human life, and that yet He should be truly man, by being actually tempted in an extraordinary degree. Being this, Jesus was qualified to be Saviour.

But what does Christ's redemption mean for us? It is, first of all, the vision of God. In Jesus we see God. We could not see God as pure Spirit, but we can see Him in the God-man Jesus. In Christ we behold the sovereignty of God, His permanent interest in man, His right in man's life, His nature as love which is also justice, and if we fail to realize our true life in Him, eventually judgment and condemnation. But, simultaneously with this vision of God, there is the vision of our own self. We recognize the mistake of sin. We see that it is folly, wrong, an insult to God, a squandering of, and eventually an eternal injury to, our own true self. We see that to abide in sin is to miss the mark, and to follow the wrong way. We discover that our life is in God, and that all other life means eternal death. Along with this, there is a newly awakened

faith in Jesus, as the one means of approach to God. Jesus, who has given us the vision of the Father, is also the only Way to Him. We feel assured of His power to help us. We can trust in Him. He is the guarantee to us of God's love, of God who is Love. We recognize with joy His eagerness to help us. There is the gladness of the angels' rejoicing in the new heaven of our own heart.

Jesus in the Gospel narrative was ever practical, ever seeking to brighten, comfort, and heal. He continues the same kind of activity in His post-resurrection life. Through His sacrifice we are made certain of Divine forgiveness. He enriches our life with the assurance of His all-sufficiency. He at once removes the obstacles which separate us from our heavenly Father, and by the gift of His indwelling Spirit, the same Spirit which enabled Him to resist all temptations in the days of His flesh, we are increasingly inspired to wrestle with temptation and overthrow it. Our life becomes more and more a temptation-proof life. Jesus gives us moral help, so that we can now summarily dismiss evil suggestion, which in former days came as a welcome guest. We begin a gradual ascent to undreamt heights of moral strength and nobility. The domi-

nating note of our life becomes sanctity. We share with Christ the sense of victory over the world, and while the remembrance of our past failure should always keep us humble, we more and more breathe the atmosphere of spiritual superiority. We are at once honoured and inspired as we hear the daily call of Christ to co-operate with Him in His holy war. The yearning of God presented in His plan of salvation takes possession of us, and becomes the paramount longing of our hearts. We hunger to bring others to the joy which we ourselves have discovered through Christ. We have our place in the Kingdom, which is humanity as it should be, and is, from its divine nature, an eternal kingdom. We are sons and daughters made in His likeness, and gradually approaching identity with Him. The Kingdom of God, the redeemed life, could never be realized in sin. Only through the power, and specially the forgiveness of the Divine Christ, is its existence made possible. In no other than Christ can men ever find redemption, for Christ's plan is God's, and Christ, the Redeemer, is God.

It is for this reason that the modern world, so distinguished in its discoveries in other departments, so philanthropic and humani-

tarian in its ideals, has nevertheless in no respect in principle surpassed the scheme of Redemption revealed in Christ. It cannot be transcended, because it is God's eternal plan brought by Himself to light. The path of true progress which lies before our race is to be found by uniting with all that modern effort of science to attain greater knowledge of and mastery over Nature, the simple acceptance of the central doctrine of our historic faith, the belief that in Jesus Christ God has revealed Himself savingly to men.

The nation which can combine the genuine scientific spirit with a candid simple faith in the Son of God, the Supreme Authority on the Being of God, the Sinless Christ, and for these two reasons the one sufficient Redeemer, will rule the earth. Emerson has said that "all men are commanded by the saint";¹ we must modernize this and say it is the scientific saints who are going to rule the world, *i.e.* those who recognize that all truth is one, and that God is truth, but that, at the same time, the one way of spiritual, and ultimately moral, salvation is bound up with Jesus Christ the Divine Son.

Jesus the Redeemer is the Christ crowned

¹ Cp. *Essays*, "Swedenborg, or the Mystic."

with eternal majesty. "I and My Father are one." "All things that the Father hath are Mine." "For He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet." We do not under-estimate the human side of Jesus. It attracts us with a perennial attraction. It brings us nearer to Christ, and makes our approach to Him easier. But there is danger and weakness in the modern tendency of over-emphasizing the humiliation of Jesus. He who was the Babe of Bethlehem, the carpenter's Son, the despised and rejected of men, the prisoner at the bar, the crucified, He is also the Christ of Majesty, conscious at all times of divine mastery, exalted far above the world and its princes. This majestic side of Christ's nature is real, not something manufactured by the disciples, not something which arose into being out of their reverence for Him. Rather is it the case that the disciples had difficulty in grasping the sublimity of His Divine Majesty. His majestic Nature is to be explained in the light alike of His Nature as Divine, His character as holy, and His work as redemptive. He is the Christ who, having passed through the humiliation of the incarnate days, led captivity captive, conquered sin and death, and, having returned to His throne in heaven,

is clothed upon with fresh majesty—the majesty of God, who had at last accomplished His saving purpose concerning mankind. We bow before the Christ enthroned, the Christ of Omnipotent Power, and unfailing redemptive interest, the Christ who, through many agents, carries on the same saving work which He did in the days of His flesh, the Christ who is working along many channels, the Christ who has given us a place in His Kingdom, and sets before us the goal of imparting the joy of it to all, the Christ exalted yet near, very God yet our Elder Brother, giver of peace, joy, assurance, victory, King of kings, Lord of lords, Blessed and Adorable for evermore.

II

We claim for Jesus Christ that He is still in the world, not merely as a traditional influence, but as a Living Person. Just as there have been monarchs who, from time to time, have secretly donned lowly attire, and in disguise have gone out among their people to discover their true feelings, their real needs, thereafter entering again into regal state and authority ; so Jesus, the Son, made Incarnate, and sojourning for a season with mortal flesh,

once again has assumed His purely Divine Nature, yet never abandons His interest in His people's lives. Jesus, as a living Person, works in the world. But to understand exactly what this means we must clearly distinguish between two senses in which God operates in the world, and between two senses in which the word "world" itself is used. God is in the world in the more general sense of Providence, upholding, sustaining, guiding the destinies of His created world; and also in the redemptive sense, seeking to carry out His eternal plan of salvation concerning mankind.

The Risen Jesus, who is also God, appeals to us specially in the second sense. He is the Divine working out personally His Redemptive Purpose among men in the world. But then we must distinguish two senses in our use of the word "world." We may say, in the same breath, and with perfect consistency, "I love the world," and "I hate the world." In the first instance, we probably mean the beautiful world of Nature, the world in which Jesus delighted during the days of His flesh. This is the world of far-stretching pine-woods, snow-capped mountains, great western lakes transformed in the summer twilight into vast expanses of beaten gold, of azure seas under

northern skies, of river-banks covered with spring primroses. Or it is the world of the nobler human qualities—courage, love of truth, devotion to research, patient effort to deliver suffering men from the terrors of disease. That is the world which we love, and which we may speak of as being truly God's world, while that other which we hate is the world of sin, of frail men who assume the airs of gods, of cruelties and wrongs, and readiness to rob the widow and the orphan in the name of law, calling it "earning an honest living." We are told "God so loved the world that He gave His Only-Begotten Son." But we cannot understand this as meaning the sin of the world. Rather does it mean that God, prompted by His eternal saving purpose, gave His Only-Begotten Son, that by His sacrifice He might remove the sin which prevented the world from being the ideal world which God means it to be. Jesus has thus to do with the world in the sense of being the sinful world. He is present in both these worlds of which we speak. Looking into the pansy's face, we think of Him. The whole beautiful earth we know is but a plot in the Master's garden. He is the God who makes it all, who sends His sunshine and His rain,

But in the other world of sin Jesus has a burning interest. We think of Him as walking about therein, with shining garments, among the lepers ; and sometimes, hearts long dulled awake ; sometimes, His ears are gladdened by the infant cry of a soul twice-born ; sometimes, eyes long blind catch a glint of the radiant robes of Him who with calm face passes through the ranks of passion-stirred men, and the sin-world knows certain of its figures no more. They have gone to a better country and a new King. There are ever those who get sick of the sinful world, and, disgusted with the sordid task of herding swine, joyfully exchange the husks, even when they are served in golden vessels, for the Bread of Heaven given from Jesus' hands.

The same Jesus Christ, the Personal Christ, whose human life on earth is an indisputable fact, is personally in the world to-day. Personality, even in the merely human sense, is a unity. It is, therefore, in its essence, indestructible. No man can destroy the ultimate constituent elements of matter and energy. All that the chemistry of the human laboratory, and the infinitely greater chemistry of Nature, can do, is to bring about the rearrangement of indestructible elements, which the older physics

called atoms, the newer electrons. How personality originates we cannot say, except that the only conceivable source of it is God. The phenomenon which we call death does not in any way necessitate the destruction of the personality of a man. Death is not destruction; it is rather reconstruction. The human body is dying from the first. Parts of the body are separated from it, and abandoned; but they do not cease to exist in their ultimate being. They go into the vast laboratory of God, to be utilized anew. Personality is not merely endowed with an indestructibility similar to that which we find in the case of matter, it has the indestructibility of a spiritual unity. People who have difficulty in comprehending the fact of personal survival, fail to recognize that something far more wonderful than that even is a fact that would be accepted by all, namely, that there will doubtless be born into the world, during the current year, a multitude of new personalities. It might, of course, be suggested that the very origination of a multitude of new personalities would involve the corresponding destruction of personalities which had already existed; but this misunderstands what is doubtless the ultimate object of the Almighty and

Personal God, namely, the creation, preservation, and development of personality. The end towards which the universe of the Personal God is moving is the increasing production, without limit, of personality working in joyful co-operation with the Will of God, the source of all personality. In any case, the fact of this inexhaustible creation of fresh personality indicates a power in the universe at least capable of preserving the types of personality which have already existed, and which, in the case of the saints at least, have developed qualities which commend them to continued existence. The personality which has lived in a life of increasing co-operation with God is a personality which cannot be conceived of as capable of destruction. Such a personality becomes part of the life of God Himself.

There is an analogy to this persistency in the life of the personality of the individual in the case of nations. It is difficult to conceive of anything more fallacious than to think that the great nations of the past are really dead. Greece, for instance, as a spiritual force, lives in the hearts of far greater numbers to-day than she did in the halcyon days of her historic splendour. The spiritual life of the world is ever the spiritual expression of

the personalities of men and nations, which are just personality in the group, the great multitude of whom are long dissociated from the material body, but are none the less living in a more effectual sense than any material body ever can be. Whether we may look from the point of view of the individual or the nation, physical death never means destruction: it means change, rearrangement, readaptation, progressive movement; but just as the ultimate constituent elements, alike of matter and energy, are indestructible, so the unity which is personality survives. Death is only an incidental change in the dwelling-place of the soul.

But in the case of Jesus Christ we are on unique ground. His continued existence in the post-resurrection life is assured by the fact that He is God. In our case, God has given us life, the gift of an indestructible personality, as the evidence would show. But, in the case of Jesus Christ, it is not merely a gift of life to Him given by God. It is God Himself. God is Life. Jesus Christ is God. Jesus Christ is therefore Life. The death of Jesus Christ on the cross was a real death. Those who have tried to explain it by different kinds of apparent, but not real death, have mis-

understood the nature of death. The human body which, for the time being, had been used by Christ, on the day of the cross was handed over to the great laboratory of Nature. The physical elements which existed in the body of Christ while He hung upon the cross are probably in the world still. During these long intervening years they may have been used in manifold ways, in the flowers, in other men, and in other living creatures. Why not? The whole world is His Father's, His own. Nothing is unholy, except through sin. But Jesus Christ was Life Himself, and the change which His mortal body underwent on the cross did not by one iota make Him less God, that is less The Life. His human life on earth just meant that, for the time being, the Divine was associated with a mortal body. Just as, in the moral sphere, Jesus' Will being the Divine will, Jesus, though really and uniquely tempted, could never sin, so Jesus, being God, and therefore Life itself, could not possibly die in the sense of ceasing to exist.

Those who disbelieve in personal survival after the change which we call death are the most narrow-minded of people; they virtually affirm that there can be no personal existence apart from that physiological combination

which we call the human body. They forget that God, who is the Sole Source of all human life, is the God who is not seen by mortal eyes. Jesus Christ is God—that is, The Life. Death, in the sense of personal destruction, is in His case a thing inconceivable. It would be the same thing as supposing that Personal Life could cease to be Personal Life. Jesus, abandoning His mortal body, lives, because He is Himself The Life, God. He doubtless works in a somewhat mysterious way, even to those who are in intimate touch with His Spirit. We are convinced that the world's history is not all the result of human planning. There is a regulative, personal force behind, which has the last word. That force is the Personal Christ who is also God, The Life.

We frankly recognize the factor of failure to bring the power of Christ's salvation to the world as a whole. There is the vast heart of the heathen world which is hardly touched. There is the still darker problem of the multitudes in Christian lands in whose souls the songs of Jesus are silent, the former enthusiasms dead. But who will be so bold as to try to explain these as due to lack of potency in the Risen Christ? Are they not rather due to human selfishness, and human neglect of

opportunities ? The modern Christian, in any case, is he to whom the most certain fact of his life is the Presence of the Personal Jesus in the world. This is not a case of transmitted influence, not merely the power of example or doctrine, not merely the ethical or doctrinal in the ordinary sense ; but a direct, personal influence, beneath, behind, and embracing human effort, influencing not merely the Christian believer consciously, but influencing also men in the world who are unconscious, because of their low spiritual tone, of His influence, just as the sick man who is unconscious may be most tenderly cared for by one of whose presence he is meantime unaware. Jesus in the world to-day is not merely the traditional influence of an ancient revelation of God united to man, not merely the power of a sinless life once lived ; but a Personal Force in the midst, operating as truly and directly as does one's most intimate friend.

But the question naturally arises, How can you prove this to the inexperienced ? May your experience not be a delusion ? One answer would be to refer the questioner to the uniform testimony of all genuine living Christians. With one voice they are able to

say, "I know that My Redeemer liveth, and that even now He is standing on the earth." The Christians know that the direct personal influence of Jesus is in their hearts, impelling them to labour, to resist the evil, to be patient, and to sacrifice. But how are we to bring this certainty to others? We answer in the broad sense, "By the Church," including in the Church the persuasive influence of individual life and example, and also the Word, of which the Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, is the most reverent and enlightened student and exponent. If any man wishes to be convinced of the reality of our claim that the Personal Jesus is still actively engaged in our midst we refer him to the Church as his guide. No one can live a purely subjective Christian life. Jesus founded His Church. His Personal influence in exercise finds a uniform means of operation through the Church. There are types of Christian who imagine that they can live their life apart from the Visible Church; but to think of doing so is neither wise nor in accordance with Christ's desire. Think of what would happen to the average civilized man if he were isolated like Robinson Crusoe. Alone he would never conceivably keep pace with the advances of

civilization, which in the meantime were taking place. He must inevitably deteriorate, and become the victim of morbidity. His one safeguard against insanity and suicide would be the cherished hope of rescue and restoration to his friends. And so it is with the individual Christians and the Church. Christians naturally combine because of the very nature of their common love and allegiance. The objective Church is, as it were, the home of the Christians already convinced of the Personal Jesus still present in the world, and the means by which the outsider, if he will, can come into touch with the Risen and Ever-living Jesus.

Only this end can never be secured by a merely mechanical means. It must imply a complete change of the heart. The Church can only point the way through the ministry of the Word, and through saintly life and example, to the lowly gate of penitence and renunciation, by which all must pass who would be certain of Jesus. To the Apostle Paul, baptism and the Lord's Supper essentially meant union with the Risen Christ; but behind these, if they are to be effective, there must have been the pre-condition of the great awakening, the second birth. There are other uses of the Christian Church, such as affording

opportunities of worship, combined efforts in philanthropic labour, as a tonic to society, and as a means of comforting and edifying the saints; but none of these uses is more important than the function of the Church, as the means ever ready to hand, to which we can refer those who are anxious to know the reality of Christ's Personal interest and work in the world to-day, and in all future time. The task of the Church in our age is vaster than in any past time. She has to offer her services to men of great variety of culture, men whose minds are biased by familiarity with branches of study which in Biblical days were unknown. To all these she offers to lead the way to the direct knowledge of the Personal Saviour present in the world. Yet she need not fear because her task is thus manifold and onerous. At the heart of her is the Personal Jesus who is also the Omnipotent God.

The Personal Christ is in the world, and in His Church. He is also, as one would expect, in the individual heart. The ever-present fact of human life is sin. It is the weed which grows in every human garden, the disease from which no man is entirely free. You find its track in all history, in every grade of

society, and in every family, among the learned and ignorant, the polite and the ill-mannered, the ancient aristocracy and the newest of the *nouveaux riches*. Along with this, you find the consciousness of guilt wherever a soul awakens, and the startling experience of every life that a man's sin, however long it may linger, eventually finds him out. And if you do find lives which are so far free from the corrupting influence of evil—lives kind, tender, true, and beautiful—examine them, and you will find that, as their reason, there is the influence of the Personal Christ. Apart from Christ, there is no mastery of sin. Sin is essentially egoism, which becomes increasingly a tyranny over one's own personality. It contains in it the principle of inevitable self-destruction. In this the Apostle Paul was right. The curse of sin springs out of itself. It means not merely insult to God, but injury to oneself as well as to other men. The choice lies between the "Furies" and Redemption through the Risen Christ. The fact of sin remains in the world; but, since Christ came, there has been not only the conviction in the hearts of His saints at all events, that sin is a thing which should not be, but the certainty that man is capable of better things,

of victory over sin by the Divine aid. The Personal Christ in our midst means the enlightened conviction that the life in sin, from its very nature, is a life of increasing shame, and at the same time that Christ is the Inspiring Certainty that man can be the victor through the help of Christ. This Personal Jesus in the life of the soul is thus a sin-destroying force, and so Jesus is the Great Joy-Bringer.

The nature of sin has often been misunderstood. For instance, it has been deemed sin to enjoy God's good gifts. Rather is the opposite true. It is sin not to appreciate, with glad and grateful hearts, all the bounty which our heavenly Father sends. The Personal Christ at once delivers the soul of the saint from the guilt of sin, and brings into being new fountains of delight in all God's manifold blessings in Nature and human life. Progress in the life of the soul in communion with the Personal Jesus means more and more of the sin-victory, more and more of Christ-likeness, more and more of Christ's joy. And along with this there is a clearer realization of the Personal Nature and the Interest of the Christ with whom we have to do. The conviction grows that this better influence in our life is

not a merely impersonal influence, but is essentially Personal, is as truly and directly the immediate influence of Jesus as was His healing touch or sympathetic word in the days of His flesh. Our whole intercourse with Christ is personal and direct. In faith, hope, and love we live with Him. Our faith springs out of the certainty of our past experience of Christ. Our love arises out of the certainty which we feel as regards His character, and from the increasing attractiveness which He exercises over our heart, and from the clearer vision which we have of His sacrifice. And from both springs the hope, which is more than hope, that this Christ who is our Personal Saviour here on earth, and who has the Omnipotent Power of God, and is a Christ of unchanging faithfulness, will give us the crown of eternal life and joy. The Jesus who is personally in the midst of His saints on earth is the Christ who will exalt us to heavenly places.

CHAPTER VII

PERSONAL OPPORTUNITY AND ETERNAL DESTINY

I

IN common language we speak of a man getting his chance. What do we mean when we think of his opportunity in regard to the future state? There can be no doubt that a man's true happiness in this life, and presumably also in the life to come, must be determined by his character.

Three distinct answers have been given as to what happens after death. There are the theories of annihilation, of an intermediate state and final restoration, and of eternal bliss on the one hand, and eternal punishment on the other. There have been many able supporters of each of these views. Against the theory of annihilation,¹ specially in the case

¹ The view has been held by Arnobius, the Socinians, Hobbes, and the comparatively numerous modern supporters of the belief in conditional immortality. *See Life of Christ*, by Edward White.

of the wicked, may be urged that it seems to lower one's conception of the character, and particularly the omnipotence and love, of God, implying that He can get rid of unsatisfactory human souls only by destroying them. It is opposed to the age-long verdict of history and of human sentiment,¹ and to the testimony of science. If we conceive of the human ego as a distinct unit, annihilation is inconceivable. On the other hand, if, in accordance with the newer experimental psychology, we think of human personality as composite, it is conceivable that in the case of the wicked, impenitent personality, God breaks it up; not destroying any element in it, but treating it in the same way as a poisonous chemical combination is dissolved into the harmless elements of which it is composed. There is the profound difficulty, however, in accepting the new psychology, that it contradicts the testimony of consciousness itself to its inherent oneness, and that its evidence is derived mainly from abnormal cases—hysteria, hypnotism, etc. Human personality is truly

¹ It has to be noted that while the almost universal testimony favours belief in immortality, there have been noted exceptions; for example, the elder Pliny, who rejected the belief. Ludwig Friedländer, *Roman Life and Manners under the Early Empire*, vol. iii. pp. 282 f.

human personality when it is sane and normal, and you cannot rightly judge of it in forms where it has ceased to be really itself.

The theory of final restoration¹ (including in its scope all who may be designated as "the wicked"), is attractive to a certain type of mind, which is strongly coloured with the valuable quality of mercy, and impressed with the power and purpose of God who seeks to bring all things to Himself. There are many grave difficulties in the way of accepting it. It implies that punishment is mainly remedial. It postulates a doctrine of God which is not true to the facts of His revealed law in history and Nature, as well as a somewhat superficial and sentimental conception of human nature. We know from experience that punishment in the case of the criminal is usually followed by the committal of still worse crimes. Each fresh period of imprisonment leads to a greater blunting of the moral sense, and a still more pronounced hostility towards well-ordered society. Look at the suffering that the drunkard has to go through :

¹ The doctrine of final restoration, or apocatastasis, is exhibited in pre-Christian times by Zoroastrianism. In the doctrine of the Christian Church, its first advocate was Clement of Alexandria, and it was further developed by his great successor, Origen.

a miserable home, the increasing distrust and detestation of the respectable members of his household, probably loss of employment and good name, filth, wretchedness, hunger, destitution, yet these do not change him for the better. They often make him worse. The more wretched he becomes, the more eagerly does he seek forgetfulness in sottish intoxication.

On the other hand, comfort and kindness very often, so far from doing a sinner good, make him worse. There is the familiar case of the mother's special championship of her prodigal son, which, so far from bringing him back to the right way, is taken advantage of by him to behave more disgracefully. There is the case of the well-to-do inebriate, with kind friends, affectionate husband or wife, and promising children, and yet going headlong from bad to worse. The problem is this, in short, that you have people going down the steep declivity of sin, and neither punishment nor kindness will stop them. It is, of course, a question how far the body is the cause of this, how far conditions will be changed in the new environment after death. But there is every reason to believe that, in the case of the wicked, as in the case of the good, the stamp of the behaviour in this life will be left, in fact will

be clearer there than here. The question of universal restoration depends on another—whether it is possible for all to repent, whether, in the case of the impenitent in this life, there is or is not a bent given to the will and to the entire ethical nature which it is impossible to change. The present life is full of never-agains. If your hand is cut off you cannot get another to take its place. If a man makes a foolish marriage, will even divorce take from him the curse of it? There are flowers of the garden of the human heart which, when once crushed, can never again lift up their fair faces to greet the parent sun. Are there not cases known to all of us, of chaste women who married dissolute men three generations ago or more, who lived and died in nameless sorrow because of that one fatal mistake, and for whose descendants the best wish you can have is that they may cease from the earth? There is a true sense in which things that have been done can never be undone.

To postulate an intermediate state where the chances of earth are repeated afresh, with a view to final restoration, is only to throw a difficult problem one step, and probably a fictitious one, further back. Men in the battle of life know that, if a difficulty has to be fought

and done with, you cannot tackle it too soon. What we dare say is that, beyond physical death, there will be for the righteous a process of moral and spiritual perfecting, though in such a way that actual sin will not be possible. It is always possible, even in this life, to expand morally, without the contrast of sin being involved. The advance to moral and spiritual elevation in the life to come cannot be adequately described, just because it will be such an advance. There will probably be as stupendous a forward movement between the present life and the life to come as there is between a living, talented, cultured personality, and the biological germ which was its antecedent going back to the origin of life on the earth.

One would not like to be so dogmatic as to reject the views of annihilation or final restoration without respectful and earnest consideration. It will always be profitable to restate and reconsider them. We must be ever grateful to their advocates. Any view which helps to stimulate enquiry and earnest thought is worthy of diligent and prayerful study. On the other hand, too great emphasis cannot be laid on the ethical truth that it is manifestly the way of God that every being has a certain place, in a certain time, to do an

ordained work ; and unquestionably the supreme duty of every man is to realize, to the fullest degree possible in this life, his resemblance to his Divine Father. Now is the time to work out our salvation. To fail to do so means here—without going to the hereafter—a destiny missed. The moral and spiritual character of the men who survive personally after physical death is the state of the blessed. Every man who has heard the Gospel, and failed to live it, is a man lost here and now. It is all very well to dream of the final destruction of evil, and the restoration of all souls, to imagine some era when all will repent and all be forgiven, and when there will be the joy of the angels over every one who was lost being won, it may be after ages have intervened, in the deep valleys of eternity ; but there are too many grave reasons for not being sure of this to encourage any one to leave his destiny to such a meagre chance.

The point that we have to fix on is, that this life, this stage in development, is our opportunity, in a very true sense our one opportunity. Our predestination is not an act of arbitrary interference on the part of God. He has given us the power to decide our own predestination, so far as the afterwards is concerned. It is

a long time that we are asked to decide for; but can any one say that we have not sufficient time wherein to decide? In the ordinary business of life you could not expect an employer to wait years before you decided whether you would accept his appointment or not, especially when that appointment was the best that any one could get. Not one of us can say that we have not had sufficient time. Even those who say that it is putting too much upon us to have to decide, on reflecting, will see that to take up this position would be to give up all that in this life is most highly valued by us—our distinct individuality, our own free-will to choose. It is the supreme dignity of human nature that we have the right and the ability to choose. One thing is certain, that the day will come when you will remember me, or I will remember you, as one who was once a man among men, and he who is remembered will surely be as much a living personality as the one who remembers, and when the one who has passed beyond the veil will have to all eternity discovered his destiny fixed by the character of the life that he lived in the days of his flesh.¹

¹ “Whether expressed or not, there lies in reality, behind all His moral exhortations, the idea that man will have to

Jesus always emphasized the supreme importance of moral and spiritual decision, choice, and progress, the far-reaching significance of time as being linked up in unbroken continuity with eternity, and personal accountability in view of personal judgment. There can be no condemnation for those who in this life are working with God in His grand, self-sacrificing, progressive work. The problem of one's chance, in the case of a man who was the child of Christian parents, and who has always lived under Christian influences, is comparatively simple. In the days when, according to a wholesale theory of predestination, the heathen were swept away to destruction, when heredity was not rightly understood, and when men had not learnt to lay such emphasis on the influence of environment, even in a Christian land, the problem of human opportunity for the child of Christian parents was easy of solution. But the larger modern conception of man's intrinsic personal value and of the just mercy of God refuses to be satisfied with the arbitrariness of predestination. What opportunity will be given to pre-historic man, to those who lived in the childhood of the race, answer for his deeds before God's great tribunal " (Bousset, *Jesus*, p. 126).

to contemporary heathen, to idiots, insane people, those who die in early youth,¹ to the unfortunate? Is there a further chance for these? They certainly cannot be classed with those who enjoy the average Christian privileges of sane and fortunate men. Perhaps the best answer to this is found in the attitude of Jesus Himself towards final things.² They are, like a great deal more, in God's hands. Admitting personal survival as an inherent quality of human life, then those human beings who have lived, say ten thousand years ago, may have made progress far greater than we who have been after them in the direct line of human succession on earth, and have got our special opportunity in Christ. What we must remember is that the unseen world is God's world as truly as this. The redemptive influence of Christ was retrospective as well as prospective. The man of the age of the neoliths, who decided for the good known to him, such as it was, can, in the meantime, have made endless moral progress. We may

¹ It is computed that about a third of mankind die in infancy.

² "Jesus in all these matters showed an unusual reserve, and never gave any connected picture of His own conception of the end of the world, and of the judgment" (Bousset, *Jesus*, p. 121).

rest assured, in any case, that the Judge of all the Universe will do right.

In the general evolution of the Cosmos, there is the moral evolution of man. Of inorganic matter, or plant life, you cannot say that it is either immoral or moral in the human sense. The flower is not immoral. It absolutely fulfils its life in the world, and then dissolves to be otherwise utilized. It almost shares in the sinlessness of Christ. God is at once the Original Basis of the Universe and the Father of men. The child man has the will to choose. The sin-history is part of the larger moral evolution. Sin may be a dearly-bought experience, leading by its punishment to greater wisdom and even moral strength. It is also often degrading and destructive of all that is truly human. The roots of the problem of the heathen, the imbecile, and even, to some extent, of the infant who dies prematurely, lie in this, that man is at once a part of the general cosmological, and at the same time of the specifically ethical, evolution. God's sun shines on the murderer as well as on the saint at prayer. That is cosmological. He will make the sin of the murderer ever more stand up in judgment against him, cause it to follow him, as if he were pursued by sleuth-

hounds, to the ends of eternity, so that no water will ever obliterate his track, no forest-deep ever cover him. He will give to the praying saint, whatever else He may deny him, the best of all possessions, the gift of His Holy Spirit. That is God in morality.

It may be that, in a light which is not ours, God views the soul of any age or conditions of existence, and decides whether the moral germ in that soul (a germ determined by personal choice), is such as to entitle that soul, in the condition of personal survival, to ascend to the heights, or to go down to the deeps of eternity. In any case, while the problem of the heathen, the imbecile, the infant, is difficult, it is the problem of God who made them all, and we may be certain that He holds the key to its ultimate solution. Our own problem has to do with that which lies near to us, and in regard to which there ought to be no doubt. Every mature man in a Christian land has got his opportunity. He may urge that no money, or too much money, or just a little money, has been his ruin. It is common, at the present time, to urge such pleas; but they imply a disgraceful misconception of the strength and dignity of human personality. Opportunity, in the religious sense, is not a

thing which depends on money, or position, or any such thing. It goes far deeper. Heredity counts for much. But even an unfortunate heredity does not necessarily mean that a soul is hopelessly doomed from the first. It is an established fact that the children even of the most vicious parents, if taken away in time, have a fighting chance of becoming honest Christian men and women. No doubt the evil seeds are there; but the grace of God and the power of wholesome example can prove too strong even for these. A great weight of responsibility lies on good citizens to see to it that every child in our midst should get an ample chance. It is part of our opportunity that we do what we should in this respect.

The average man can never rightly say that he has not had his chance. To those who say that they have not, there is the heart-searching question to be put—may it not be that you are personally to blame for not seeing that you *did* have your chance? We are on as sure ground as we can be when we say that human personality is a unit which is indestructible, which will survive after physical death and bear the moral and religious character acquired during the present life, and that its condition

will be determined, as far as we can see, for weal or woe eternally, by the decision which we make here and now, a decision which every sane person can make for the good, and which all who come to years of discretion cannot deny that they have had ample opportunity of making. Let men make their decision at once and at any cost. Every day delayed is a day out of the Kingdom even while we dwell on earth. Heaven will not be the same to everybody who is deemed worthy of it in the hereafter, just as men get varied degrees of the life that may be called heavenly while here on earth. What we need to do is to use our opportunity, make the decision for the higher life and live it in ever richer, fuller measure, yield ourselves to the moral evolution under the grace of God, rejoice with unbounded joy in God's life here on earth, cherish no evil thoughts, forgive, seeing that this is the condition which must be fulfilled in order to be forgiven, be true, whoever else may be false, have the Jesus-Spirit, which alone is the key to joy here and hereafter.

II

There are three questions which appeal to us for answer in regard to life—all of them

ultimately religious questions : (1) What is the origin of life ? (2) What is the purpose of life ? (3) What is the destiny of life ? We say that on a certain day, at a certain place, at a certain moment on the clock, you were born. In reality, that is no adequate description. Not only is there reason to believe that conscious life began long before actual birth,¹ but that the living cell is immortal.² In a literally true sense, the first living cell on the face of the earth was also you. How did this first cell come to be ? Given that first living cell, we have the beginning of that long process by which all living forms have been evolved. Chamberlain and Salisbury say “there is no direct evidence as to the time or the method of the introduction of life upon the earth. The earliest legible record of life, in the form of fossils, bears evidence of great advances in evolution along many divergent lines.”³ Science does not claim to be able to say how this first cell came to the earth. Did it come from some other planet ? Was it brought by a meteor ? Was it a case of spontaneous gener-

¹ “There are excellent reasons for supposing that consciousness does exist before birth” (Yerkes, *Introduction to Psychology*, p. 213).

² Cp. J. A. Thomson, *The Biology of the Seasons*, p. 10.

³ Cp. *Geology*, vol. ii. p. 111.

ation? If so, what does spontaneous generation mean? The educated religious instinct refuses to think that anything save the Eternal Personality of God could have been the origin.

The fact is certain, too, that at some point in the evolution of the planet the factor of life appeared in the form of a cell. In two forms, life has developed: (1) plant; (2) animal life. Under these two heads we have an almost endless variety of types, and in certain cases it is difficult to classify forms of life under either. At the head of the animal kingdom stands man,¹ who has probably been about a million and a half years on the earth.² The Book of Genesis tells us that man was made of the dust. This may be understood as a popular way of describing protoplasm. The Gnostics conceived of man as being formed of a kind of panspermia, or seed-matter. The Japanese mythology derived man from the Impetuous Male Deity.³ Each religion has supplied its own explanation of the origin of man. The best is undoubtedly a combination of what we might describe as the Biblical and scientific views. Science says,

¹ Man, from a purely zoological point of view, is a placental or Eutherian mammal (Deniker, *The Races of Man*, p. 12).

² Cp. Professor Keith.

³ Cp. the Kojiki.

given the one living cell (without affirming positively how it came to the earth), we can explain all living things. The Bible says, God, the Eternal Personality, at the basis of the Universe, is the one possible ultimate origin of that living cell as of all things. Science adds that the way of God in Nature is not to make things of a sudden, but to build them up as a skilled artist does.¹ He does not make a primrose, root, flower, leaf and all, in one night.

The day will probably come when much more light will be thrown on the nature and origin of life. It may even be proved that the conception of spontaneous generation is not a dream. But, however that may be, the deep religious fact must remain untouched. Nature, in the scientific sense, embraces the physical Universe, man, and other living beings that may exist elsewhere, and God is the Personality at the basis of all, in whose light alone we can see light. Even supposing spontaneous generation were proved to be a fact, the only explanation of it would be found in the Personality and power of God.

¹ Science in this does not necessarily contradict the narrative of the first two chapters of Genesis. A process of long evolution is not denied in the teaching of the various days' work.

Whatever questioning there may be as regards the origin of life, there can be no doubt as to the fact of human life. What, then, in the light of our modern religion, is the purpose of this that we call our life? This has been the problem of all religions, and all philosophies, of the old Testament, of Plato, and of our own Westminster Confession. What is the purpose of my life? What am I here for? What am I expected to do before the sun goes down? Now I take it that there are three main types of answer: (1) That which concentrates attention on the present world—secularism in theory or practice—the doctrine of the selfish man, to whom the world is simply a place to make money in and to enjoy pleasure or power in. Under it may be included the view of life held by a man who is not selfish at all, but an idealist—a man who wants everybody down to the poorest to enjoy the happiest life while they have it, and to get their just share of the good things of this world. (2) There are those who concentrate their main attention on the world to come. To them the present life is but a desert. Over there is the Promised Land. Life is but a probation, a vale of suffering and tears. Some have even gone the length of maiming and mutilating them-

selves in order to be surer of that life to come.¹

Now there is a great deal to be said for this view. It emphasizes the importance of eternity, its endless duration, its intimate connection with life here and with a high sense of duty here. But it can be, and often has been, a grossly irreligious view, when it forgets that this world is God's world, and that God has given us this world for joyful service and progressive self-realization, that this world is a world of endless beauty and delight, and that every innocent enjoyment is an act of worship. (3) The modern view of the enlightened Christian is one which combines the truth of both of the preceding. It recognizes that Nature is one, that time in reality is not an antithesis to eternity, but a part of it. It recognizes the unbroken continuity between the life on earth and the life hereafter, just as the life and growth from the seed below the ground are indissolubly a part of the plant's life as a whole. It bids us be glad in this world as being God's, our Father's. Do not miss the beauty of the green earth, the joy of home, friendship, and honest work. And, just as time is part of eternity, so every man is just a part of what we call Nature in

¹ Cp. the Skopsi in Russia.

the large sense, and more particularly a part of the kingdom of man. Therefore his life must never be self-seeking. It cannot rightly be a life of bargain-making, by which we give God worship and He gives us, as our reward, heaven. Its joy is to sacrifice. That is God's way, and therefore ours. Only by laying down our life can we find it. The one path to fuller life lies over Calvary's hill.

Jesus advised the rich young man to obey the moral law. He emphasized the virtue of personal morality. But Jesus Himself broadened out the moral law of Moses, notably in regard to the Sabbath, marriage, and forgiveness. It is easy to reread the law of Moses in our fuller light. God, the Ultimate Basis of the Universe, is also the Personal God. Religion is an immediate experience of communion between God and man. The Ten Commandments at least suggest facts clearly recognized by modern minds—the unswerving law of God revealed in nature, and yet that spirit of mercy in man towards man, demonstrating the greater mercy of God. They demand reverence for God. How could it be otherwise, if we realize what He is like in His power and His goodness? To honour God is a form of self-respect. The duty of man to nourish

that which is highest in himself, the sacredness of human ties, so important for the true well-being of the kingdom of man, the suggestion that he who kills or injures another kills or injures himself, the supreme value of truthfulness and honesty, the sacredness of the claims alike of the individual and society—all these, which are at least implied in the Commandments, are they not just the ideas which increasingly regulate the best life of modern men?

Rightly understood, there is no better answer to the question, “What is the purpose of human life?” than that given by the first of the *Shorter Catechism*: “Man’s chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever.” Glorifying God is not necessarily merely singing praises to Him, though psalm-singing is an inspiring and soul-lifting thing. Glorifying God, to modern religion, is rather lending a helping hand to God and to others, assisting them to work out the Divine world-plan, and specially fostering God’s purpose in the spiritual progress of men. Your duty is to do what you can for men as God’s children. It is therefore a social duty, but a duty which keeps God in view from first to last. The hand or foot cannot work on its own account, ignoring the claims of the rest of the body.

The more the hand does for the rest of the body as a whole, the greater is the sustenance given back to strengthen the hand itself. Losing your life, you find it. Giving your life for men as God's children, you recover it. It is given back again to you in fuller, richer measure. The man who lives for himself would be like the hand that tried to work for itself alone, and ignored the body to which it belongs and the common life pulsing through the whole. It would inevitably wither and die. How many withered hands in the great social body must Christ see in the world of to-day ! Every man who tries to save his life, ignoring his solemn duties to others, is a withered hand. The true object of my life, if I am to live at all, is to serve God. As Jesus washed His disciples' feet, so God serves man for man's perfecting, and so we, to live with God, must help Him in His work.

Equally is our object in life to enjoy God in the for-ever joy. A great scientist has told us that fear is ceasing to trouble the modern man. He does not dread the coming suddenly of an earthquake, as something sent to destroy man, as a judgment for some national sin. His better understanding of the Universe, and the nature of the Personality at its basis, has

taken away superstitious fear. Modern men have caught a note in the glad tidings of great joy, which our fathers never heard. Ours, as children of Jesus, is the for-ever joy. St. Francis was, in this respect, a man before his time when he found delight in his companions, the flowers and the birds.¹ We rejoice in loving things, because God is in everything. Living for God, as God's children, opening our hearts to the beauty and delight of the world of Nature, finding in all truth further evidence of His Presence who is the truth, and giving what strength or talent there is in us to help God in the realization of His world-plan, ours, even now, is the for-ever joy.

III

There is ever parting on the way. The human race goes on, carrying out its appointed task on earth, while the individual members of that race, by tens of thousands, every day, drop from the ranks. The problem of destiny is thus twofold. There is the problem of humanity and its history, physical, mental, and moral, on this planet; and there is the problem of the individual members of the race

¹ Cp. Paul Sabatier, *Vie de S. François*, p. 71; *The Little Flowers of St. Francis of Assisi*, p. 49; *John Woolman's Journal*, p. 19 (Everyman's Library).

—the problem of personal survival after death. What progress will be made by man physically, morally, and mentally, we can only guess at. It is difficult to say whether man will improve physically at all. The average increase in longevity is found, on the whole, to be due to decrease in infant mortality. In this there is a danger that weaker types are being preserved, and that it may thus tend to the lowering of the average standard of physique. The strain and pressure of modern civilization militates against sound health. On the other hand, there are those who hope that the life-destroying elements in modern civilization will be gradually eliminated, and others who believe that, by a better understanding of the causes of senile decay,¹ we shall be able to prolong healthy life far beyond the present average. It is also very difficult to make a dogmatic pronouncement in regard to the moral progress of humanity. There are as gross sins perpetrated in Christian countries as ever were done in savagery.²

On the other hand, the great moral prin-

¹ E.g. Metchnikoff and Voronoff,

² Crawley shows that savages are really more moral than civilized men and women who have lost the natural instinct of shame. *The Mystic Rose*; also J. G. Fraser, *Psyche's Task*, The German Atrocities in Belgium.

ciples are coming to be more clearly understood. Christianity, which has made a beautiful Christian family life, and given wife and child their true place, which has abolished slavery, and mitigated the horrors of war, and taught at least a certain section of the community to live chaste in heart as well as in outward life, and has awakened a great desire to redeem even the apparently hopeless, is not, we venture to think, a spent moral force. It will help humanity to greater ethical achievements. Just because Christianity is a leaven in the heart of humanity, we may anticipate moral progress. Advance in man's mastery over Nature is assured. Even greater discoveries are likely to be made in the future. How far scientific grasp will eventually be determined by physical strength and moral character is an interesting problem. A race of physical degenerates is not likely to produce men capable of sustained original research, or even of mastery over ascertained facts. Nor will men of impure minds and uncertain morality be likely to possess that resolute persistence which truth demands of all who would share her secrets.¹ We may reasonably,

¹ Cp. as to the necessity of truthfulness in the pursuit of scientific study, Prof. J. A. Thomson, *Progress of Science in the Century*, pp. 9-10.

on the whole, anticipate progress in that section of humanity which will continue to live on the earth, continually losing its older and weaker members, and continually adding new, like the trees of the forest through successive seasons.

What will be the end of the world section of humanity? The Bible describes the end of all things through destructive fire.¹ It is not impossible that this might happen. But, according to the analogy of what has occurred elsewhere in the Universe, the end of human existence on earth is likelier to be brought about by cold.² As there was a long time in the planet's history before man's appearance on it,³ so in all probability the earth will continue ages after human life, as we know it, has ceased, even allowing a certain adaptability in man to the gradually changing conditions of temperature. In course of time, human history will be a tale of a long retreat from the poles to the tropics, a reign of perpetual ice and snow setting in behind man's retreat. Unless it be possible to transfer our planet to another younger sun, however much man may succeed, meantime, in mastering

¹ Cp. Bousset, *The Anti-Christ Legend*, chap. xvi.

² Cp. Nansen, *Farthest North*.

³ Cp. Haeckel, *Last Words on Evolution*, p. 22.

Nature, the inevitable must happen.¹ Mankind will fall a victim to the relentless evolution of the physical Universe. Human life will be impossible on the earth, just as it would be impossible for the isolated human body to live at a point three hundred miles out in space. Evolution will retrace its steps. The higher forms of life will be cut off first, and then gradually the others, till all is gone. Human life, in its last chapters on earth, as far as we can see, will be a tale of suffering infinitely worse than that of primitive man, with his undeveloped mind and his crushing burden of mystery and fear. Of course, it is always possible that there may be some unknown factor which may be brought into action. There is always the possibility of a form of physical renewal,² although scientists do not at present see how. Whatever may happen to the earth eventually, there are surely some things in it which, if we remember any-

¹ Even though the older theories of the mathematicians and geologists have had to be considerably modified by recent discoveries as to the constitution of matter and the energy of the atom, the potential energy of the sun cannot be inexhaustible (Hinks, *Astronomy*, pp. 41-2; Lodge, *Electrons*).

² R. K. Duncan would maintain that the new Physics would seem to favour the view that the Universe has probably a method of recovering (*The New Knowledge*, p. 245).

thing,¹ we will tenderly recall—the old home of our childhood standing in the grey winter light; that other house which we made for ourselves, hallowed by many joys and, it may be, by many heartaches; and some of us will surely remember most vividly that which we never saw with our actual eyes, but which we seem to know so well, the green hill called Calvary, where the cross stood. May it not be also that it is possible for us who pass into that other state to sympathize in unseen yet helpful ways with the men who will continue to suffer in the world very much as we suffered, struggling, it may well be, with advantages greater in some respects and less in others, for the realization, through the strenuous use of mind, will, and feeling, of the image of the Eternal Personality whom we call God.

“ Red of the Dawn !

Is it turning a fainter red ? So be it ; but when shall we lay
The ghost of the brute that is walking and haunting us yet,
and be free ?

In a hundred, a thousand winters ? Ah ! what will our children be,
The men of a hundred thousand, a million summers away ? ”²

¹ Lodge maintains that memory in itself is mental, not merely physiological (*Raymond*).

² Cp. Tennyson.

The other problem of human destiny is whether or not there is personal survival. There can be no doubt of the almost universal cry for personal immortality. Is the cry a proof that we shall be immortal? Tacitus says, "Agricola, made known to posterity by history and tradition, will be for ever."¹ In a sense, the children who stand round their mother's grave are her personal survival. Her character and disposition live in them as truly as she lives biologically in their bodies. But men have in all ages asked for something more definite than this. They have demanded that the *I* who thinks his own thoughts, and wills his own conduct, and goes his own way, in a sense independent of every living soul, so that supposing there were just one man left on the earth, he could still live his life, will survive.

Now it is important to see that the conviction that there is personal survival is distinct from some particular view of the future state. Some maintain that the manner of our immortality cannot be described at all.² But the human mind refuses to remain in a state of agnosticism in regard to its eschatology. All religions of mark have tried

¹ *Life of Agricola*, p. 46 (Church and Brodribb's Tr.).

² Cp. Lotze, *The Philosophy of Religion*, p. 174.

to give some account of the existence beyond. Among the older religions there were two types in regard to their description of the future state. The Egyptians and Assyrians believed in a bodily resurrection.¹ The Greeks refused to think of the body as rising again. In the Old Testament, there is a gradual development in the conception of the state after death.² In the New Testament emphasis is laid on the eternal separation between the just and the unjust. To the righteous there is the city of God with its streets of gold and its harps. To the impenitent there is everlasting fire and the torments of the Devil and his persecuting legions. Important modifications of both of these views have taken place in the modern Christian consciousness. It is repellent to the strenuous Christian of to-day to think of heaven as a state of indolent ease, where the only exertion is a kind of spasmodic expression of wonder at the divine greatness and goodness. Well did Tennyson express the best feelings of our times when he said, "My idea of heaven is

¹ Cp. Salmond, *Christian Doctrine of Immortality*; F. W. H. Myers, *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death*; Haeckel, *Confessions of a Man of Science* (where there is set forth the idea of a kind of physical immortality).

² Cp. Purves, *Hibbert Journal*, October 1907.

to be engaged in perpetual ministry to souls in this and the other worlds.”¹

Our view of the nature of punishment has been in some ways intensified and in others modified. The undoubted testimony of science points to the rule that for every broken law there must be punishment, suffering. It has been pointed out that, in keeping with the evidence of science, the modern novelist is a more emphatic preacher of the inevitableness of punishment than the modern minister. On the other hand, we have got new light on the physiological constitution of our bodies which must certainly be taken into consideration when we are discussing the doctrine of hell-fire.² We know that no human frame can endure fire. The shudder which went through us as children, when, after burning our finger, we were told that that was a sample of what hell would be like, does not any longer touch us. Eternal pain in the case of a body such as ours is a thing impossible.

¹ *Contemporary Review*, March 1903.

² “Who is there but would be sobered by an actual sight of the flames of hell-fire and the souls therein hopelessly enclosed ?” (Newman, *Immortality of the Soul*, p. 141). An appeal of this kind makes no greater impression on the mind of the scientific theologian than the sticking of pins in the wax image of an enemy by some demented woman claiming to be a witch.

Put the worst sinner in the world into a hot furnace, and, in a second or two, he would not only be beyond all pain, but every muscle, nerve, and bone of his body would be broken up into the various chemical elements of which the body is made, in no way different from those in earth, air, and water. A distinguished Scottish professor has told how, at the cremating of Herbert Spencer, simply a wreath of white smoke was seen to ascend. It is impossible to hold at one and the same time the two old-world doctrines of the resurrection of the physical body and hell-fire, and if we think of a spiritual body as the body of the resurrection, how could such a body feel fire ? Our present bodies are certainly not constituted to stand fire. In fact it is rather an illustration of the kindness of God that, in the case of man or beast which has the misfortune to fall into a great fire, death comes almost immediately, so making all possibility of suffering to cease. Pain is only where the forces of life are able to make a struggle. Where the conflict is hopeless for life, pain ceases. Are we to suppose, then, that God will furnish the impenitent sinner with a special body which would suffer, yet never be destroyed ? If that were so, then there is

the difficulty that God would be punishing the sinner through a different body from that in which he had sinned, and would present God in a character which is altogether revolting to the Christian conscience.

It helps us better to understand what must be meant by everlasting fire, if we think of hell as a condition or state, rather than a physical abode. The suffering of the impenitent sinner is as if the human body were capable of enduring eternally the pain which burning produces. The idea of eternal punishment is certainly not to be set aside with a contemptuous sneer. As far as we can see, there is a hell of cold before the human race which remains on the earth, in their last grim struggle which, in spite of all efforts, must inevitably end in the cessation of all human life on this planet. If this is part of the coming course of terrestrial evolution, may we not hesitate to doubt the possibility of something similar in the individual life beyond death, and looked at from the ethical point of view? The testimony of science is that the broken law must mean punishment, as surely as the broken axle means a break-down of the waggon. Yet, even in regard to the inevitableness of punishment for sin, we must ever keep in mind the

foundation truths that God is a God of love in eternity as in time, not a God of sheer vindictiveness, and that He is working in history, not for the degradation of human personality, but for its purification and perfection.

But it is not merely the nature, intensity, and duration of punishment for sin, here and hereafter, in regard to which men are modifying their views. The whole question of what we mean by personal survival is being pressed upon us. Naturalism would seem to affirm the ageing of the mind with the body, and would appear to say that, with the dissolution of the physical frame, the mind, the personality, ceases. It is pointed out that memory fails and the senses become blunted with age. It has to be shown, however, that this is not rather the rusting of the instrument¹ which the personality, the mind, uses, than the decay and eventually the death of the mind itself. Annihilation for anything that exists is unthinkable.² This is true of the commonest atom of matter, and surely it must be equally true of the mind that conceives matter. What exactly we mean by personal

¹ Rudolph Otto, *Naturalism and Religion*, p. 355.

² Maeterlinck, *Life and Flowers*, p. 19.

survival is somewhat difficult to explain. It is not merely recollected experience, or memory, for we know that a severe blow can suspend the memory, although the personality is not destroyed. It is not mere will—will being rather, as it were, the helm of the ship. It is rather the ego, the “individualised energy” which is deeper than memory or will even, which mainly determines the mind and even the body, and which does not necessarily imply a break in the line of hereditary continuity which binds us on to our ancestors. This ego lives after physical death, bears upon it the character partly acquired during terrestrial life, becomes associated with a new spiritual body, and reaps reward or punishment for deeds done in the days of the flesh.

How far the power to recollect is restored in the new body is part of the unrevealed secret still in the hands of God, though now known to all who have acquired this body. Death is not a case of dropping a lamp into a river.¹ It is giving up, on the part of personality, of the last of several houses, as no longer habitable. Strictly speaking, we live in many bodies, not simply “in the body,” as if it were one. What was once our body in the days of our

¹ Martineau, *Endeavours after the Christian Life*, p. 176.

youth has been blown to the ends of the earth. Fragments of it may be in the Arctic regions, in the depths of the sea, in the west wind, in the galvanic currents of the earth, or even out in interstellar space. Physically speaking we may be in the air which men will breathe ages after this, in the aroma of flowers which maidens will wear a thousand summers hence, in the light which shines from some distant star. Why not ? We shall be serving God in the great work of His Universe. The body is not laid to rest for ever in the grave. It will rise in myriad forms to serve God the great Creator, turned out from Nature's workshop, where not even the shavings are thrown away. But none of the bodies in which you have lived, not even that which you will leave at death, is you. We shall live clad in the spiritual body of which Paul tells us,¹ in a body similar to that of the Risen Christ, which could pass through closed doors. Our body will never be destroyed. There is no such thing as physical annihilation.² You only part company, as it is popularly

¹ Cp. Westcott, *The Historic Faith*, p. 59.

² "Death stands to-day before me, as when a man desires to see his house again, after he has spent many years in captivity" (from an old Egyptian text). Steindorff, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 135.

thought,¹ all at once, with your last physical body, as you have parted with several others gradually and unconsciously in your previous life.

We cannot say how far there is a kind of intuitive memory, which is not dependent on brain-tissue. We were living biologically ages and ages before our parents gave us a name. Have we any recollection of this? I say we have in the general race-consciousness, which is vivid in proportion to the strength and intensity of personality. The personality which lives on in the spiritual body will be its own memory. It will be a personality stamped with a moral character, and that is memory, a kind of intuitive memory. It is just possible that the removal of the body in the case of the impenitent, on the one hand, and of the good on the other, may have this effect, that each will show more distinctly his own special bias. The body, because of the pain which it can suffer, is often a restraint to the sinner who would otherwise devour sin greedily. On the other hand, the righteous always feel, as Paul did, that the flesh is a handicap in the race towards God. Lodge

¹ The clever experiments of Professor MacEwen, of Glasgow, have shown that what is described as death is not so complete as is popularly supposed.

has advanced a theory of gradual incarnation which is certainly helpful. In the spiritual body we may expect the realization of a fullness of that spiritual life never experienced at the best in the flesh. A true immortality must be a personal immortality. I must at least know myself. In spite of all social ties, most intimate friendships, and the general solidarity of the race, we are unmistakably certain that there is that which separates us from every other. Inasmuch as we must conceive of the future state as being a further stage in our progressive spiritual existence, this factor of distinctness cannot be conceived of as being lost. Recognition of, and communion with, others must also be possible. What God has given to us here, as one of our chief means of spiritual advance, will be increased in the life to come. The future life will be a continuation of the present, morally and spiritually connected with it, conscious, personal, and enlarged, and associated with a spiritual body suited to our advanced spiritual conditions, just as the bodies of our infancy, or middle life, were suited to these respective stages while we were on earth.

CHAPTER VIII

LIFE IN THE KINGDOM. HOLDING THE FAITH IN THE LIGHT

I

IN our sixth chapter we saw how the Personal Christ is in the world, the Church, and the individual Christian soul, ever redeeming, sanctifying, edifying. Through the Personal Christ the Kingdom of God was established in the world. Through Him it continues. Through Him each separate Christian has a place in the blessedness thereof. The Kingdom embodies all that we mean by God's sovereignty and redemptive purpose, and the life of faith, hope, and love in Christ Jesus. The Kingdom of God on earth is marked by progress, certainty, and co-operation. Its armies are ever advancing, its ultimate victory is ever sure; and even the humblest citizen thereof is conscious of being a co-worker with the King, who knows of his work, and gives it the full appreciation which it deserves.

The Kingdom of God is the new State within all other States. It is spiritual in its nature, and interpenetrates all others. Just as its great Founder was ever conscious of sublime exaltation above all earthly powers and rulers, so, from its divine and exalted nature, this Kingdom is raised above all others, and even the poorest of its citizens is clothed with a dignity and honour which the greatest of earthly monarchs cannot presume to have in his merely secular authority. The Kingdom of God can never pass away from the earth. It is eternal. No man can safely prophesy what the future of the secular powers of the world may be. Many think that, in all probability, there will eventually be a few exceedingly strong empires. The absorption of the small dependent states, they believe, seems inevitable.¹ The little man must go into the big man's house for protection. But, even supposing one State were to become so strong as to dominate, and eventually absorb, all the rest²—suppose Russia, or Germany, or one of the Anglo-Saxon nations, or even China, were to become the mistress of the world—

¹ Cp. F. Naumann, *Central Europe*, pp. 180 f.

² It is possible that the ultimate outcome of the League of Nations will be one world-state.

the emperor of the one World-Power would not be God. Humanity could never return to Cæsar-worship. No Cæsar could take the place of Christ. No man could guarantee the permanency of his kingdom. Even if we suppose that the abolition of all kingship took place, and we had universal Socialism, under which all men would be theoretically equal, and in which the supreme director of affairs, popularly chosen, would be one whom the man in the street would call "comrade," and one who would be wise to treat all others with courteous respect, this head of the socialistic state would never take the place of Christ. It would be well for such a man if, with the manifold irritations and anxieties of his life, he were able to find comfort in the King.

The Kingdom of God, from its very nature as spiritual and eternal, must increasingly dominate all others. It is unlimited in the sphere of its interests. By telephonic, telegraphic, and telepathic means, it is in intimate communication with the ends of the Universe. This power is secured to it because it is of God. But the Christian man who is a citizen of the Kingdom is summoned to aspire to the loftiest ideals of citizenship. No other

kingdom has such a sublime morality. The common standards of status in the world are wealth and position. But these measurements are false and unreal. A man's worth can never be determined by what he owns. This is just as certain as it is that the realization of the socialistic claim for an equal distribution of worldly goods would never make all men equal. There is a far deeper class separation on the grounds of real culture and real moral worth, than through money. The former are true, the latter fictitious. The only way by which real equality, so far as this is desirable, can be obtained, is by all men becoming citizens of Christ's spiritual Kingdom on earth.

The morality of the Kingdom is at once individualistic and social. It is so radical and comprehensive that it embraces both. It goes straight to the heart. It presents its Law of Love to God and to our fellow-men, and so includes the individual life and the life of the community as a whole. It holds up the ideal of Christ's example, and claims that, if men will realize this, they will have at once the highest morals for the individual man and for society. The morality of the Kingdom thus essentially finds its expression in the ethics of the Reformed Church,

which, as contrasted with Romanist ethics, originates in the new life of Christ in the heart, and from the centre of life dominates the whole round of human activities. From the very nature of the conflict with sin, which goes on ever more keenly in the life of the redeemed, the citizen of the Kingdom must be a man of discipline. Self-mastery and self-restraint must be dominating principles of his life. Everything else must be made subservient to efficiency as a soldier of the cross of Christ. He must ever aim at being master of himself in every direction, in order to be all the better servant of Christ. Thus he will be able to help the King in His grand world purpose. For while the citizen of the Kingdom, like His Master, has a dignity which lifts him above the world, its sordid ideals, and tinsel pomp, yet he must ever help his King in His great redeeming plan in the world.

The citizen is a man convinced that the power of the Kingdom to conquer is irresistible, if only it gets its chance, a chance which we can give it if we will, a power surpassing all earthly might by as much as the force of the sea in a storm, or the power which guides the stars in their courses, surpasses the beat of a butterfly's wing. Yet, labouring to realize the King's

purpose, the citizen feels that a guarantee of success in this is personal progress in civil worth. As in the advance of physical science, we have at once the rejection of error and misunderstanding, and the discerning of new yet well-established truth, so, in serving Christ's Kingdom, our personal life must be a conjoint rejection of error, the false, and obscure, and assimilation of the true and enlightened. And in all our civil service, whether in self-improvement or forward work among others, we labour in the unbroken fellowship of the King, who is at once our Head, our Example, our Inspiration, and our Co-worker. Thus serving in the Kingdom, we have assurance of absolute security. To be in it is to have life eternal, even here and now. Through Christ, our King, we know that we have already passed from the bondage of spiritual death to eternal life.

But what, then, of that which we call *physical* death? To the Christian, death is not the king of terrors. He is God's servant, sent on a ministry of love. It is error to speak of the pains of death. The pains are due to life attempting that which is no longer possible. The near approach of death is heralded by the cessation of pain. Death, in the sense of

destruction, is, to the citizen of the Kingdom, a thing unthinkable. Death is to be more truly with Christ, which is far better. To the educated Christian, death is but a stage which must be passed on the journey. It means the abandonment of a spent physical organ which has served its day. The body is but the temporary booth, which the wandering nomad has erected for shelter overnight, and which he abandons at the eternal dawn. Death, in the natural order of things, means deliverance from the handicap of increasing bodily weaknesses through old age. These things are frankly recognized to be hindrances in the way of the normal evolution of the soul. It is thus death to the rescue, not death to annihilate.

We look to the time when Christian knowledge will have so permeated the human mind that mankind will become altogether delivered from the prevailing exaggerated importance attached to death as a break or cessation, when the sense of regret will be almost entirely absorbed in the joy of our friend's liberation, just as we feel exalted in the success of our friend who gains a splendid post, even though his gaining it means his removal from our immediate neighbourhood. This end will be further contributed to as men come to a fuller

realization of the truth that the human soul lives even in this world in a timeless eternity, and, in the light of this, the brevity of separation by physical death will obtain its due proportion in our eyes. The body is at best only a temporary organ, given by God for disciplinary purposes, in the prescribed course of spiritual development. The real value of the Christian life, entitling it eventually to the reward of heaven, is that, while involved in the demands of the body (food, raiment, etc.), the Christian has decided finally and absolutely to live for the fulfilment of God's will, and thus has discovered in measure something of the freedom from undue anxiety which characterized the human Jesus. When the body has served its appointed purpose it is best that it should go to minister to God's uses in other directions, and under other conditions.

Again, death, to the Christian, is the one way to freedom from harassing moral restraint. The body is the mould in which the statue is cast, and from which, by death the liberator, it must be taken, that it may appear in all its artistic beauty. Human life is the mortal womb in which the eternal babe is conceived, and from which the child must emerge to

know the joy of heaven's sunlit days. The body is perhaps not exactly our enemy, but it is a field in which potential foes of the soul are always lurking.¹ It certainly is a battle-ground in which the enemy is never altogether killed out, and in which heroic qualities need ever to be evoked. The body, if not in itself bad, is at least the medium of evil passions and dangerous suggestions.

Even Paul, the greatest of Christians after Christ Himself, the foremost of merely human citizens of the Kingdom, ever felt elements in his flesh warring against the Spirit. From its very nature, the body, while affording a means of discipline, always prevents our moral position from being absolutely impregnable, and our enjoyment of the Kingdom from being absolutely complete.

And again, death, to the Christian, is the pathway to reality. The bodily organs are never absolutely trustworthy witnesses. Even in the present world we recognize the unreal elements in life, our, at best, but faint approximation to a grasp of the unseen realities. "Now we see in a mirror obscurely, but then face to face." Death, to the Christian, is the only way by which, under the affectionate

¹ Cp. Morgan, *The Religion and Theology of Paul*, pp. 18, 27.

guidance of God, we can come to a right understanding of the real. It is the divinely appointed road to a world in which, in large measure, the bewildering perplexities which at present surround us will be removed, a world in which earth's mysteries will be heaven's revelations. Death, to the citizen of the Kingdom, is a step into the light, an advance breast-forward into the dawn.

And what, then, of the hereafter? What but the fuller realization of that Kingdom of God which we already know on earth? The hereafter of the Christian is not in the faintest degree a probability. It is a certainty. He who has brought us through death takes us nearer to Himself. Death is our home-coming to the fuller realization of the certainties of Christ. To imagine that death can end your soul is just as rational as to think that your death will bring to an end the world and God. Your Father who has made you, and shown His love in Christ to you, and given you the peace of His Kingdom, will save you in the endless hereafter.¹ It is your Father's good

¹ "Die Hoffnung auf das Jenseits gehört untrennbar zusammen mit dem dieses Ganze tragenden Gedanken der vollkommenen Vaterliebe Gottes" (Wendt, *System der Christlichen Lehre*, vol. ii. p. 636).

pleasure to give you His Kingdom. It will be faith and love and hope, greater faith and love and hope, as your knowledge in Him, in whom you have believed, and from whom nothing can separate you, is increased, and made radiant with His grace. We know how often we never realize the depth of our love for some one till the temporary separation of death has come. So we never can estimate the fullness of our love for Christ till through death we are brought to Him. Your life in the hereafter *will* be, and will be *your* life. Under better conditions and under fairer skies, where no cloud can ever darken, and the heart never grows weary either of praise or of service—that is the afterwards of him who through Christ has found his place in the Kingdom. It will be life wherein you are surer of Him whom you have adored as your King, and life wherein you have increasingly cause to be certain. It will be life wherein you will find the crown and fulfilment of the great Fundamentals of our Christian Faith: God is Love, God is Life, God has been certainly made known to us in the Divine-Human Son, Christ is personally present with us in the world, in the Church, and in our own redeemed hearts. Much concerning that afterwards must necessarily be

obscure ; where, in the infinite extent of our King's Abode, we may be called to serve, we cannot tell. The soldier of the Empire, who has served in India, does not dictate to the War Office in what part of England he is to be located when the summons to return home is issued. We know that, wherever we may be placed, it will be joy and freedom far transcending anything that our minds can conceive now. Our true freedom will be in ampler service done, with greater power, and under ideal conditions. Work is the highest delight where we have the vigour to do it easily, and are possessed of the right disposition.

Will we know Jesus then, as men knew Him in the days of the flesh ? Yes. The only separation between Him and us now is that He is in the Resurrection Body, while we remain meantime in the mortal flesh. But then we shall know Him, being also in the body of the Resurrection Life. Our joy will be to serve the King ; our crowning delight submission. The selfish wilfulness which makes us seek our own ways in this world, irrespective of others' rights, will be absent. There could be no place for such in the heaven of Christ. Nothing short of the ideal will satisfy. Our thrilling delight will be to minister to Christ,

following Him whithersoever He leadeth. Our whole life will be life as God's children, our whole life will be guided by love, its entire blessedness will be the godliness of love. In the hereafter of the Kingdom, to which physical death is but the doorway, we shall be convinced far more than now that whatever God ordains is right, is alone good, and in this conviction we shall find our crown of peace. The end of all anxiety will have come,¹ because all our life will be in accordance with God's will, the will which alone is omnipotent, which alone is absolutely good.

Such is the Christian's faith, which is also, from its very nature, Christian certainty. The surprise ever is, that with such an offer made, men should still turn to husks. To-day many people are seeking proofs of the reality of the Beyond through Spiritualism. Many of the results claimed through this means do not command confidence. No doubt a clear distinction requires to be made between vulgar types of Spiritualism and real Psychic Re-

¹ Spiritualists say that the evidence which they have from the other side indicates that there is nothing of the nature of physical pain in the Beyond, but that there may be keen mental anxiety. But those who have learnt to submit without question or doubt to God's Will in Jesus Christ can have no anxiety.

search. The former bears to the latter very much the same relationship that exists between astrology and astronomy. The former is unscientific, the latter at least endeavours to use scientific methods. The former is heartily distrusted by the great bulk of the people, the latter is unfortunately to a large extent misunderstood, except by those who have given its aims, efforts, and evidences, careful and sympathetic study. The scientific attitude towards Psychic Research demands (1) that we should not reject as absurd what is claimed by men, whose judgment is worthy of every respect, to be a legitimate field of ascertainable knowledge; (2) that there should be sympathetic interest in, and encouragement for, those who believe in the reality of this field of knowledge, and readiness to examine scientifically and sympathetically all data which are presented as verified evidence; (3) that there should be personal effort to aid all honest endeavours to obtain conclusive proof of the reality or unreality of those psychical phenomena for which the claim is advanced that they are messages from the other side; (4) that each should use his influence to educate the popular mind to understand that legitimate Psychic Research, so far from being

antagonistic to Christian teaching or belief,¹ promises to be a new and powerful support to what is essential in Christian doctrine and practice. The scientific attitude must in this, as in all else, be that of the open, alert, sympathetic, and courageous mind, combined with a well-balanced reserve of judgment until sufficient proof is produced one way or the other.

There can be no doubt that the hesitancy of a very large body of educated opinion to accept the view that the leaders in Psychic Research have already established their claim to have proved the certainty of communications from the departed, is comprehensible. Many are impressed by the dream-like and shadowy nature of the professed utterances from the other side. This, however, does not necessarily demonstrate that they are unreal, when we take into consideration the spiritual conditions under which existence on the other side is continued. Many others are impressed also by the fact that these so-called messages, even when they come from men of outstanding

¹ Cp. the habit of saying "a little prayer first," previous to a sitting (Lodge, *Raymond*, p. 219), and the vision of Christ, and the sense of His Presence everywhere (Lodge, *Raymond*, pp. 230 f.).

ability and attainment, while they were in the flesh, do not imply either further spiritual progress nor even the intellectual grasp and penetration associated with these men in their mundane life. It has been remarked that the William Shakespeare called out of the deep of the spirit-world by the clairvoyant is a fool, and that the entire world of the hereafter which Spiritualism professes to reveal is not only a world which shows none of the spiritual advance which we should expect, but is largely a world of sentimental inanities. But, on the other hand, it might be argued that the obviously commonplace character of the communications is neither due to the fact that they are fictitious, nor does it imply that the departed have not made enormous spiritual progress; but is due to the difficulty of communicating because the methods employed are in a rudimentary condition, and also to the fact that, while memory is essentially mental in its nature,¹ still the efficiency of memory, while we are in the terrestrial state, is largely determined by the use of a sane and vigorous brain.

Altogether the objections raised, while natu-

¹ "Memory turns out to be essentially mental" (Lodge, *Raymond*, p. 328).

ral, are not to be regarded as outside the sphere of rational explanation, and the wise and scientific attitude must be one of sympathy with the efforts being made, and not one of unreasoning rejection. In fairness it must be said that certain of the results already derived by those working in the interests of Psychic Research are well-established and trustworthy facts. What has to be determined is whether what are claimed to be *bona fide* messages from the other side are really such, or are due to some extraordinary power of telepathy¹ of a far more wonderful character than we ever supposed to exist previous to the undertaking of the systematic investigation made by the students of Psychic Research. The task which lies before those who are convinced that communication can be and has been already established with those who have gone to the other side is to devise such tests that there can be no reasonable doubt that these are due to a form of telepathy, however wonderful. Such tests are surely not beyond the ingenuity of the human mind to discover.

In any case, the ultimate success or failure

¹ Telepathy, in the large sense used by Myers, includes communications from the other side, as well as what is popularly understood by the term (J. Arthur Hill, *Psychical Investigations*, p. 226).

of the student of Psychic Research cannot disturb our Christian convictions, our certainties of personal Christian experience. Spiritualism labours to a large extent under the disadvantage of seeking its proofs through abnormal states of mind ; but Christian conviction is a certain fact of the radiant conscious life under the full sway of reason. Spiritualism, so far at least, can at best suggest to us, in the afterwards, a shadowy and, in some respects, a miserable prolongation of present conditions of life ; whereas Christian faith possesses a certainty which is founded on God, who is at once Life and Love, and on Christ, the Divine Son, who ever points the way to a summerland of God which is fairer than any earthly day, where all that is valuable in the present life will be preserved and transformed with heaven-born light, which in its sublime grandeur will transcend anything that we can at present conceive. “ Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.”

II

Jesus said to the woman who was a sinner, “ Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace.”

These words are eternally true in the educated religious experience. Only through the life of faith, which is founded on knowledge and ever leads us to greater and clearer knowledge, permeating us through and through, do we attain to peace. What alone satisfies the human heart is the assurance of a living faith, which supports us in the midst of the continual flux of things. Broadly speaking, there are three main positions in regard to faith. At the two extremes there are the agnostic on the one side, and the Romanist of a conservative type on the other.¹ The enlightened member of the Reformed Church possesses what is good in each of these. The agnostic stands in the full light of modern knowledge without the comfort of the Christian faith. The Romanist holds many of the elements of the Christian faith and doctrine, but refuses to stand with these in the light. The enlightened Protestant, believing that alike the true elements of faith and the genuine light of modern knowledge are both of God, holds

¹ We do not include under this head the modernist school of Romanists, Loisy, Tyrell, etc. The rise of these men proves that even in the Roman Church it is being recognized that that Church has come to the parting of the ways. It must either go forward, along the lines indicated by them, to life, or continue as it has been, and die.

his faith in the light. He has all the peace that the life of faith alone can give, and, at the same time, he has not the secret dread that there must be something wrong with the elements of faith which its chief supporters forbid the simple believer to carry into the light. The enlightened reformed position is, therefore, the only one which admits of progress. The Protestant is stubborn as any Romanist can be in his determination to remain in the condition of faith. But he has also the satisfaction of knowing that the faith which he holds is one which can stand the glare of modern light.

The supporters of the counter-reformation had some reason on their side when they shrank from the immoralities and religious excesses associated with the attempt to return to primitive Christianity ; but neither of these charges can be laid at the door of the faith of the enlightened Protestant of to-day. His movement is not back to the primitive age, but on with the ever-living Christ ; not towards immoral licence, but towards the realization of a heart-chastity. The prospects of the Roman Church cannot be encouraging to its leaders.¹ As an eminent writer has pointed

¹ Cp. M'Cabe, *The Decay of the Church of Rome*.

out, her condition is very much like that of pagan Rome before her final fall, living through the disciplinary experience of conflict on her frontiers, but, at the heart, dead or dying.¹ The inspiration of the Reformed Church and her moral confidence lies in the fact that she holds the faith in the light. There can be no end to the victories of a Church which sincerely holds this position. Neither of these elements, faith and light, can be ignored. There may be a few rare minds which can live absorbed in the study of purely scientific facts. There may be some unfortunate souls who can rest fairly contented holding certain elements of faith, even when they have grave doubts that there is any substantial truth behind these elements. But the great mass of thinking men desire at once faith and light, faith and truth. We know that it is vain to demand the fullest light. It is only the dawning still. But, in such light as we have, let us live the life of faith. The knowledge of the physical Universe has changed considerably since we were children. It still continues to change. Dogmas accepted without question when we were youths require careful restatement. But the life of faith is what we

¹ Cp. C. P. M. Sabatier.

must live to have peace. The choice is ever faith or not faith, peace or not peace. And down in our hearts there is an instinct which says, "Why, as God's children, should we not have peace?"

Now, what are the elements of faith which we may hold in any light without the fear of being accused by our consciences of being untruthful? In view of all that has been shown, we retain to-day, as in former ages of the Church's history, faith in God, Origin of the Universe, the Personal God, our Father, embodying in His character righteousness, mercy, love. This is the first element in the faith-life. Without it there can be no real peace, only the caricature of peace of mind which results from baffled despair.

Then, again, there is the conviction that the Universe, whatever we know, or do not know, or will never know, about it, is God's Universe. The child alone in the room in the darkness of night may dread the dark, and feel how mysterious it all is; but it does make a difference when she remembers that in that same house, however dark and still it may be, there is her mother—her mother, who would respond to the slightest cry for help. The Universe, faith says, is God's, not a tyrannical

machine which may crush us at any moment without an atom of feeling. In spite of its mysteries and our ignorance, God is in it. Moreover, it is just because it is God's Universe that it is a universe to be enjoyed. This is one of the veins of our religious life whose riches and beauty have not been fully realized by the great bulk of Christians. The main attraction of sin is its real or supposed pleasures. If Christians realized, as they should, their joy in the Universe and its God, far fewer would be tempted to try the far country. You ought to be a puritan in your personal life ; but let there be no limit to your delight in God's Universe. A distinctive message of the Master was the manifest goodness of God revealed always and everywhere. A right understanding of this will lead men to be happy and grateful under every condition, except when held in the grip of unconfessed, and therefore unforgiven, sin.

Then there is faith in the eternal value of human personality. The conscious light of the individual man is not a transient spark appearing for an instant in infinite darkness. It is not a stray beam from a far sun, reflected back again to be once more absorbed. The soul who has known God and himself will

continue his own distinctive existence. This is our faith, as touching human destiny. God destroys no entities in His physical universe. He will certainly not destroy the most wonderful, the conscious personality of the individual man, especially when that man is a Christian, desiring continued life, conscious of powers of spiritual growth and ability to co-operate with God in His work. We shall all be changed, but we shall *be*. In the life of faith we are convinced that this Personal God communicates with man. He may not answer prayers to give us things which we wrongly think are for our good. His ways of dealing with us are not man's ways. Yet on every side we meet God. Without and within, He communicates to us. Not, maybe, with the same circumscribed narrowness with which the desire of one friend is spoken to and heard by another. But God's messages are at least as certain as man's. The life of faith becomes a life of undoubted experience. We increasingly realize that God is in every part of our active life, in the conscious and in the subconscious, in the spirit and in the body. In keeping with this, it is an article of our faith that every man has the "Teutonic" right to deal straight with God in his religious exercises. The hum-

blest Christian is a friend of God. Friends may show us the way, may direct or encourage us by their testimony; but the life of faith becomes a real life only when the soul of man communes directly with God through Christ Jesus, the Divine Son. In such a life, the priest as a mediator is not only unnecessary, but he would be an obstacle. Otherwise is it in regard to the prophet's voice. In all ages there have been men, usually because they had trodden manfully the most thorny parts of the dolorous way, who have known God better than their fellows. These are the prophets—a race represented not merely in a restricted part of the Old Testament; but blossoming forth in different ages and lands. No man can be a true preacher who is not to some extent a prophet. He is the fresh messenger bearing the newest glad tidings. Thus, too, the Bible, whatever faults or flaws may be found in it, is the reading-book of the life of faith. It is supremely the book of the prophets—of the men who entered most deeply into the Presence, and specially of Him who not only entered into, but was Himself the Presence. Reading the Bible, you get into the atmosphere of the Presence. We may not, with the Reformers, make the

Bible the supreme authority in everything, in place of the authority of tradition and the head of the Catholic Church. We do not recognize all parts of the Old and New Testaments as being equally authoritative. The Bible is not an authority on geology, or anthropology, or any such subject. But it is the book of the life of faith, because, infinitely better than any other, it takes you into the Presence. The eternal verities of the faith stand. The accidental and fortuitous in religious belief may go ; but the great essentials, never. To realize them, however, men must be guided by the principles of love, light, and life. They cannot be forced on any man by violent means. A man cannot have them burnt into his heart at the stake, nor can he be tortured into believing them by the terrors of any Inquisition, nor have them forced out of him by being formally excommunicated outside the pale of any branch of the Visible Church. They are of God, they are His gift to man, and they come to be a living part of a man's life by the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit. They take possession of that soul which has decided to follow the path of truth and light, of love, sympathy, and reverence. They find a home in the heart of him who encourages,

as every one should, the soul-longing for our Heavenly Father. Nowhere is there a field where the experience of these verities thrives as it does in the vineyard of the Reformed Church, with its light and its freedom. As children of the Reformed Church, we hold our faith in the light. We are not afraid to hear any earnest man, even though we may suspect that he differs in his views somewhat from ourselves. The truth has never any need to be afraid. We are ready to learn from any man who seems likely to teach us some new truth. Where the clearest rays of light are shed, there we want to stand, in order that we may be able to see the truth, that we already hold, more clearly; yet are we convinced that, long ago in Galilee, that was made known, which the increasing light of the advancing centuries, so far from destroying, must ever rather illuminate and accentuate—the happy souls are those who pray, the one satisfactory life is the life of faith in the Eternal Father of love. To men of the after-years, many of our present-day mysteries in regard to the physical Universe will doubtless be facts of common knowledge to school-children. There will probably be new means of securing bodily comfort and greater relief from physical pain.

But the men, then as now, who have heard on their life's journey the words " Go in peace," " Go in Christ's peace, happen what may," and have realized the certainty of that peace, will be the men who hold the faith founded on the great Fundamentals of our Reformed Church—that is, hold the historic faith fearlessly in the light.

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